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KINGSCONNELL,

A TALE.

BY MRS. GORDON,

AUTHOR OF

“THE FORTUNES OF THE FALCONARS.”

“The solemn curse of a widow sad,
Above the grave of her darling dead,
Will fester and wither the joy and fame
Of the fairest lands, and the proudest name:
Nor years, nor tears, will efface the shame.”

REV. J. C. EARLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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KINGSCONNELL,

A

T A L E.

CHAPTER I.

“ I know a maiden fair to see,
Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
Beware! beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!
She has two eyes, so soft and brown.
Take care!
She gives a side-glance and looks down,
Beware! beware!
Trust her not!
She is fooling thee.”

LONGFELLOW.—FROM THE GERMAN.

THE sounds of mirth and revelry were ringing from the stately roof of Milldenhanger, a fine specimen of an English baronial residence of the seventeenth century, embellished by all the luxury and splendour of modern days. On this eventful night a brilliant ball was given by Lady Mountjoye, which, in addition to the

large and distinguished party who were passing their Christmas holidays in the house, had assembled a concourse of the aristocracy and higher class of gentry for miles around. A suite of lofty and richly-decorated apartments was thrown open on the occasion, and the picture-gallery was appropriated for dancing. We said that no Agrippa's glass can now be found, but we retract our words. The poet, the novelist, in virtue of his craft, has still the power to present his readers at will with its scenic phantasmagoria; and at the moment that on the surface of our's the slow-rolling clouds have swept away the vision of Beatrice Lockhart, prostrate in her wretchedness upon the ground, the tears streaming over her pale cheeks,—her quivering lips articulating in despair the name of Arthur,—another and a brighter scene unfolds itself to view; a fairy-world, as it appears, of light, and flowers, of joy and music, into which the steps of care seem unable to intrude, occupied by groups whose grace and beauty, and apparent enjoyment, are well adapted to the place and time.

The inspiring strains of a waltz had just ceased; and the dancers made a brief pause. One amongst them, a young man whose tall

and graceful figure, and singular beauty of countenance, were remarkable even in an assemblage boasting many specimens of manhood such as the higher ranks of English society display in perfection,—after conducting his partner, a young girl at her first ball, to the side of her *chapéron*, and there remaining for a few minutes in conversation, gradually withdrew himself from the circle, and advancing towards the large open door-way which communicated with another apartment, stood leaning against it for some little time in silence. The room into which he looked contained various groups, who were sitting, standing, or promenading about; and just at that time several persons, surrounding a young lady on a sofa at its upper extremity, seemed earnestly pressing some petition, which at last was favourably listened to.

“Thank you! thank you!” exclaimed a gentleman in an enthusiastic tone. “How very good! Hush!” turning to the company,—“Miss Adair is going to sing.”

A murmur of pleasure circulated through the room. A harp, music-stool, and stand, were brought forward, and officiously arranged,

and then the young lady, rising from her seat, advanced towards them with a smile.

“I am afraid,” she said in a low voice as she prepared to sit down, “that many people will think it a great bore to have their dancing interrupted.”

“A bore! music like yours a bore!” exclaimed the enthusiastic gentleman. “Do not wrong us so far, Miss Adair. I do not believe this company contains the Vandal who would think so.”

As if in confirmation of his opinion, a circle of eager listeners now pressed forward to surround the musician; and perfect silence prevailed, at the first touch of her white and taper hand on the chords. Gazers as well as listeners there were amongst them; for the form before them was one of no common degree of attraction. She was a very young girl, not beyond eighteen; but more fully developed in person and in aspect than is usual at that age. Above the middle height, her finely-proportioned figure was full and beautifully-rounded; the arm, the hand, and foot, might have been models for a sculptor; and the slender waist contrasted well with the broad and graceful

sweep of her shoulders and neck. Her face completely corresponded with her form. The forehead was low, but broad and full, particularly in the regions of Tune; its alabaster whiteness, crossed by one or two fine blue veins, contrasting with the dark-brown Grecian eye-brow, and the rich, long-cut eye, of a peculiar hue, between brown and hazel, and of a very peculiar degree and variety of expression, enhanced by long lashes of the same colour with the eyebrow. The nose was straight and fine; the mouth had a character of its own; it was finely-formed and coloured, though not small; the under lip slightly pouting, which imparted much piquancy to the face; and the exquisitely-moulded chin fell into the round, full, white throat, with a graceful and easy undulation. But the complexion was what above all completed the charm of this very lovely face. It was such as is often seen to accompany hair of the colour of her's; which in childhood had unquestionably approached very nearly, if not altogether, to red; but had now altered to a warm, rich shade of brown, that glittered in the light like threads of gold, and whose texture and profusion were of themselves sufficient to have embellished a less at-

tractive person. And the complexion, clear, bright, transparent,—the colour “like roses beneath a pure stream,”—the surpassing whiteness of the neck and arms, gave a brilliancy to her whole aspect almost indescribable. As she sat, in her simple white dress, unadorned by a single ornament save the diamond arrow which gathered up the rich knot of her hair behind, and drawing her harp towards her, swept her slender fingers across the strings with a touch which at once disclosed a master hand, a low murmur of irrepressible admiration broke from some of the spectators, succeeded by a breathless stillness, in the midst of which ascended a burst of glorious sound,—a volume of harmony, from one of the finest and most highly-cultivated voices possible to conceive ; regulated by the most perfect musical taste, and full of the most passionate expression.

The singing of Mary Adair was such as, even in the present musical age, is rarely to be heard in private society ; and a residence of the last few years in Italy had brought it to the highest perfection. It had, moreover, the rare merit of being readily at the service of those who really wished to hear it. Her deportment, though perfectly self-possessed and confident,

was perfectly unaffected; that of one who thoroughly knew her own place and her own claims, and had always been accustomed to find them acknowledged. She now, after having delighted her auditors by a magnificent recitative and aria from an opera new to almost all who heard her, returned again to her seat, beside a tall, and very beautiful girl, with dark eyes and hair; who, however, was in a few minutes led away to join the dance, which was again forming in the adjoining room. Miss Adair, on plea of fatigue, declined following her friend's example at this time; and remained, the centre of a little knot of gentleman, who stood around her. The room was now thinned in consequence of the dancing; but the same young man already mentioned retained his position in the door-way, and became the object of remark to a lady and middle-aged gentleman, who sat together in the recess of a deep bay window at the opposite side of the room.

"Who," enquired the latter, "is that remarkably fine-looking young man?"

"That," replied the gentleman, "is Mr. Bertram, one of the visitors in the house, the son of Sir Thomas Bertram, a rich Scotch

baronet. This young man's sister, Miss Bertram, was sitting by Miss Adair, a few minutes ago."

"I remarked her," said the lady, "a very beautiful girl, but less striking, I should say, than her brother. Is he the eldest son?"

"Not as yet, but I imagine he will soon be. The elder brother is in very bad health, I understand. Indeed I heard Lady Mountjoye talking of his case as hopeless, yesterday."

"This young man," pursued his friend, "has an expression of thought and melancholy, at times, that rather strikes me. I have been fancying all sorts of histories for him, as he has stood there. And why *is* he standing there, I wonder? He looks like a creature under a spell."

"So he is, I think," returned the gentleman. His eye glanced as he spoke, towards the sofa occupied by Miss Adair.

"What a singularly attractive creature Mary Adair has grown up!" exclaimed the lady, her eye following his. "I never was more struck, more astonished, than when I first saw her, last summer, on her return from the Continent. She gave no promise of such grace and beauty as a child. There is something really fascinating about her."

"That is precisely the word, Lady Lucy," replied her friend. "Miss Adair *is* fascinating. I have been much struck with her, and much interested in her character, as a study, during my present visit. It has all the charm of novelty, besides, to enhance the interest; for though so old a friend of her father, our paths in life have of late years been widely-apart."

"Yes," said Lady Lucy, "Lord Mountjoye's diplomatic employments have led him so much to the Continent; and you——"

"And I have gradually retreated, like a hermit, to my cell," pursued the gentleman. "But still I have not foregone the pleasure of gazing on the world 'from the loop-holes of retreat.' Of all the studies I have ever engaged in, there is none that so deeply interests me as that of my fellow-creatures. There is an enjoyment in sitting apart from the throng, and watching them; scanning physiognomy,—noting the small indications of temper and disposition which escape all but a leisurely and dispassionate observer, and arriving in this way at an accurate perception of many a hidden feeling and motive—which no one can conceive who has not experienced it."

"It sounds alarming enough, Mr. Ingram,"

said Lady Lucy, smiling; "only I give you credit for being anything but an ill-natured observer; a student of mankind, not a satirist."

"You do me no more than justice, Lady Lucy," he replied with a bow.

"Well then, having expressed my belief in your candour of judgment, I want you to tell me the result of your observations in the present case. Tell me what is your opinion of Mary Adair?"

"I think her, in the first place, and beyond all things else," returned Mr. Ingram, "precisely what you pronounced her a few minutes ago—fascinating."

"But you lay a peculiar emphasis on the word. I do not think we mean the same thing when we use it."

"No, I am not sure that we do. I use the word in its original meaning; and you in its restricted sense. You simply mean to call her charming and attractive. So do I. But I think her something more than these."

"And what?" enquired Lady Lucy with great curiosity.

"Did you ever, in the course of your reading," asked Mr. Ingram, "form any acquaintance with the mysteries of a much-maligned science called Animal Magnetism?"

“Never; beyond knowing that there is such a science, so-called; and having heard of some of the quackeries and impositions practised under its name. What has that to do with our subject?”

“I am coming to that. We shall leave out the quackeries and impositions; and waive the question as to whether such are not the inevitable accompaniments to any new discovery; and whether they may not be considered to prove that there is something in it; even as the shadow proves the existence of the substance. But be that as it may; one amongst many results of my own researches into these curious things, is a conviction that by means of them we may find explanations of much that is otherwise unaccountable; amongst others, of the extraordinary influence, or *fascination*, belonging to some individuals in their intercourse with their fellows.”

“And you attribute this fascination to Mary Adair? Surely — surely,” exclaimed Lady Lucy, with an irrepressible smile,—“in the case of a young and beautiful girl, an heiress, and accomplished as she is,—her attractiveness admits of an easier explanation?”

“All those things have their effect, of

course," said Mr. Ingram. "But I am speaking of something apart from them. You have not observed her as I have done. And I may add that she is not the first person similarly endowed, who has come under my observation. Have you remarked her eye?"

"It is a very beautiful, and certainly a very uncommon eye," returned Lady Lucy. "I have remarked that. I cannot exactly say what it is that renders it so. That long, rich, half-languishing formation, and then the sudden change when she looks up! What is it?"

"In the course of my life," said Mr. Ingram, "I have met with two individuals besides herself, resembling her likewise in complexion and in other characteristics, though not possessed of the same amount of beauty; but with eyes of a similar form and expression; and all three had the same power of the eye, as it may be termed. Watch Miss Adair, as I have done for some days past, and you will find that in whatever part of the room any man of the company may be, and however engaged, if she fix her eyes upon him, sooner or later after, you will see him at her side."

“Are you serious, Mr. Ingram! How very strange.”

“Judge for yourself,” said her friend. “Did you observe that a minute ago, her eyes were wandering from the party who surround her, and fixed on young Bertram?”

“I did not observe it. Was it so?”

“Yes, I particularly remarked it; and now do you see——?”

“I do. He has left his immoveable position in the door-way, and has approached her. She is making room for him on the sofa beside her.”

“And there he will remain while she does; and when she leaves that place, he will follow her. And do you see a young man with fair hair, leaning over the back of her sofa?”

“Yes; he came up just as her song was finished.”

“He did. And perhaps you did not remark that he had previously been sitting beside a very pretty girl. You know her of course; Amy Vernon?”

“I did not see either of them, until he came up to Mary Adair. I have had eyes for no one but her since she came into the room half an hour ago. I do know Miss Ver-

non. Is this young man Sir Philip Chester, whom I have heard talked of as an admirer of her's?"

"He is; he came here to-night with the Vernons. I saw those fascinating eyes fall upon him, just at the conclusion of the song; and the same thing occurred there. In a few minutes after he had left Miss Vernon's side, and joined the party round the enchantress."

"Very singular!" exclaimed Lady Lucy. "But, Mr. Ingram, these are strange things, too, to say of so young a girl. Mary Adair is just eighteen. She is not even introduced; beyond having visited with her mother since she returned to this country. She is only to be presented next season. One cannot imagine a creature of that age, deliberately forming designs to attract admirers; more especially in such a case as Sir Philip Chester's, which really involves something like treachery from one woman to another?"

"I by no means accused her of doing anything of the kind *deliberately*," replied Mr. Ingram. "You misunderstand me. I do not imagine that she is at all aware as yet of the nature and extent of the influence which she will always exercise over our sex. But Miss

Adair is a precocious creature in most respects; and although as yet not come out in English society, her mind and feelings have been early developed by her foreign life. It is, I clearly see, her nature to desire power, above all things over the men with whom she comes in contact; and depend upon it, the more she becomes aware of the spell which she possesses over them, and which as yet she exercises almost unconsciously, the less scrupulous will she be in making use of it. Do you know, lovely as she is, and charming as I acknowledge her to be, I should not at all like, if I had a son, to see him exposed to her influence. I am sure that it is one which would not result in good.

“And yet,” said Lady Lucy, “they say she is most amiable.”

“No doubt. And yet I may be permitted to add, who would *not* be amiable, surrounded as she has been all her life by affection and enjoyment,—blessed with health, and youth, and loveliness, and a naturally joyous temper? There must be a surer foundation than amiability, to build upon for an immortal creature, in contemplating the trials and temptations of life which must come to all. But it is not that I doubt her amiability. It

is that she is, and will be still more so as she grows older, a perilous creature to any man who comes under her power. Let her fascinate as many as she pleases, she can only marry one; and she is a woman who will turn many heads, excite many violent passions, unsettle many imaginations, and upset many schemes of quiet happiness, amongst men to whom she never can be more than the idol of an hour,—a brief but never-to-be-forgotten episode in their existence.”

“Mr. Ingram, you are a prophet of evil! These are dark auguries!” exclaimed Lady Lucy.

“I read them by the light of experience,” replied he. “Too happy shall I be, for my old friend’s sake, and his daughter’s, if I find them falsified by the events, supposing I live to see them. Do you observe,” he added, after gazing for a few minutes on the group before them, “do you observe how completely young Bertram is held captive at this moment? I have watched that affair with great interest for some days. The young man himself interests me. He is a noble creature, full of talent, but excitable, and I should fear unstable. It appears to me that his heart is pre-occupied;

that he would fain, if he could, resist the fascination of Miss Adair's presence, and that his senses are taken prisoners against his will. I have remarked his actual struggle against this singular power of her's, with something like wonder in what her spell consists, which, as I said, I can find but one theory to account for. I have seen him this very night, and on other occasions, drawn, as it were, involuntarily within the circle surrounding her; and once there, the result has invariably been the same as we have just seen. It appears to me, too, that she is unusually desirous to attract him,—struck, no doubt, by his personal beauty, and the brilliancy of his conversation, which is rather remarkable in so young a man."

At this moment the party they were observing was broken up by Sir Philip Chester, to whom she had apparently engaged herself, offering his arm to Miss Adair, in order to join a waltz just beginning. Arthur Bertram, who had come too late to secure the first chance for her hand, claimed her promise for the next dance; and, as Mr. Ingram had predicted he would do, rose from his seat and followed her in her stately progress towards the dancing-room. There, swimming through the graceful

waltz of those days,—a contrast to the wild whirl now in vogue,—the splendid form of Mary Adair was followed in its course by a pair of soft dark eyes, filled to the brim with tears of wounded and mortified affection. These were the eyes of Amy Vernon, who had come to the scene of festivity that night with the brightest anticipations of happiness, which up to the fatal moment when that resistless glance had fallen on Sir Philip, had been fully realised. Now, left alone, for so she felt herself to be, though surrounded by a crowd, she was experiencing some of the most painful sensations known to the heart of woman. Gentle, timid, and retiring by nature, she was precisely a creature who could have no chance in competition with one like her new rival,—a creature whom to know as she really was, it was necessary first to love; and whom neglect or unkindness from those who were dear to her, at once deprived of spirit and energy,—almost of beauty. As she now sat, pale, drooping, and saddened, by her mother's side, a casual observer could scarcely have recognised her as the lovely, bright, and blooming girl, who a short while before had been lightly flying through the waltz on the arm of one whom she

had unconsciously suffered to become her idol ; whilst he, although unquestionably deeply smitten by her beauty and sweetness, was not, in the world's code of honour, *committed* by any thing which he had as yet said or done. Poor Amy Vernon was framed of such stuff as victims are made on ; and so thought the all-observing Mr. Ingram, who having followed the party in whom he was so much interested to the dancing-room, now sat gazing at the down-cast girl with heartfelt pity and regret. At last the waltz was over, and Sir Philip led his radiant partner to a seat ; remained by her side till her hand was claimed by Arthur Bertram, and then retired, not to Amy's vicinity, but to an unoccupied corner, whence he could follow her with his eyes in her progress through the quadrille which succeeded the waltz, and in which the striking appearance of this beautiful and strongly-contrasted pair attracted many glances besides his, compounded of admiration and of envy.

It was the same during the whole evening. Miss Adair, although in her own house, did not dream of paying any attention to her mother's guests ; and, with the exceptions of Emily Bertram, and one or two other intimate young

female friends, scarcely addressed a word throughout the ball, to any one save the still gathering train of gentlemen who attended her steps. There was no offensive *hauteur* in her deportment, which, as we have said, was perfectly easy and unaffected, but she looked, and moved, and acted as a being born to be worshipped and obeyed; and from whom anything like reciprocity of attention to others had never been exacted; and a man must have outlived, like Mr. Ingram, the passionate fervour of youth, must have learned to look on life as a calm spectator, and no longer join in it as an actor,—above all, must have been possessed of a counter-charm to the wonderful “power of the eye,” exercised by this enchanting creature, to have been able to detect beneath an exterior and a deportment like her’s, the lurking germs of egotism, selfishness, and insatiable vanity. Such was not the case with Sir Philip Chester, and still less with Arthur Bertram, who remained, in the fullest sense of the word, fascinated to her side, or fixing his eyes upon her wherever she moved, when the crowd of claimants for her hand withdrew her from him. And yet all the feelings ascribed to him by Mr. Ingram were struggling in Arthur’s mind,

though he himself was in all probability less cognizant of their workings than this accurate observer. The charm which attracted him to Mary Adair was one which overpowered the opposition of his own will; an opposition, however, less and less vigorously attempted every day that found and left him near her.

And after the gay and dazzling scene was over, the music hushed, and the dancers gone, when at last the tumultuous throbbings of his over-excited pulses permitted him to sink into an unrefreshing sleep, the same struggle reproduced itself in his dreams. He, too, that night, was in the spirit by the side of her whom his soul loved; perhaps truly so; for who shall say that in the mysterious world of sleep and trance, there may not often be meetings afforded to those between whom exists the wondrous tie of sympathy, however far apart their bodily frames may be resting, leaving the spiritual tenants free? Arthur, like Beatrice, was in the woods of Kingsconnell on that eventful night, wandering with her through their well-known paths, and sitting by her on the lime-tree seat. But over his dreams, as over her's, the same dim, lowering atmosphere of pain and trouble, error, and mystery, seemed

to brood; something unaccountable, and impalpable; yet not to be shaken off. At last the scene of his vision changed. He was still by the side of Beatrice; but no longer beneath the rustling summer-foliage of the lime-tree. He stood with her on a spot which he had once, for the first time, visited in company with his brother William and Mr. Carmichael, and more than once, since then, alone,—the site of the desecrated burial-ground in the Pleasance. And there, while in the very act of clasping his arms around her, as she appeared standing close by him, a form—shadowy at first, and gradually becoming more and more distinct and palpable—seemed to interpose itself between them. It was the form of Mary Adair, radiant in beauty, as he had so lately seen her. But while he gazed on her, her lineaments appeared to alter. She faded, darkened before his eyes into the semblance of a bent and aged woman, wrapt in tattered weeds of widowhood; who, fixing a wild and menacing scowl upon his face, stretched forth her withered hand, and pointed her finger towards him. He started with such violence as to dispel his unquiet slumber; and

springing up in his bed, beheld, stealing through the window-curtains, the same breaking of the joyless winter-dawn, which at the same moment, in another place, was meeting the eyes of Beatrice.

CHAPTER II.

*“ Her duty is to stand and wait :
In resignation to abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.”*

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

WINTER with its storms had passed away ; and an Easter sun was shining warm and brightly on the lovely seaward vallies of the Isle of Wight. That sacred festival had fallen unusually early in the year we write of, but already the climate where William Bertram had passed the winter was full of the amenity of a much more advanced season. With all its mildness, however, it had been found insufficient in his case to ward off the insidious advances of consumptive disease. He had repeatedly, during his residence there, been threatened by premonitory symptoms of his

former complaint; and the advance of spring, as usual in similar circumstances, induced repeated attacks of fever, which, slight though they were, made alarming inroads upon his strength. Previous to his parents and sister quitting Ventnor, to spend the Easter holidays at the villa of one of their noble friends, near London, it had been deemed advisable to call a consultation of a celebrated London physician, with the medical man who had attended him during the winter; and the result was that both agreed in recommending a sea voyage, to be followed by a lengthened residence in the south, as the best, indeed only probable chance, for his ultimate recovery. To this measure the invalid himself most reluctantly yielded his consent; and was, in truth, only persuaded to do so by a sense of duty, a feeling of the wilful sin incurred by any one who declines using human means for the restoration of his health. So far as he himself was concerned, the languor of illness hung so heavily upon him, and so intense was his craving for rest, that the idea of reverting once more to what had once been his greatest enjoyment, a life of wandering, was fraught with painful anticipation. He longed for no-

thing now, so much as for repose. To recline upon a couch drawn near a window, which commanded a beautiful view of the sea, and there read and meditate; at times to saunter slowly along the beach, with the support of some stronger arm; or to sit and muse a little space in the lovely churchyard of Bonchurch,—these had now become the favourite occupations of his day, and the utmost efforts to which his strength seemed equal. And to leave this calm retreat, and enter once more into the noise and bustle of life, appeared hateful in prospect. Could the secret wish of his heart have been gratified, William Bertram would have returned to Kingsconnell, and there, in calm and holy tranquillity, have awaited the summons to depart, which it daily became more impressed upon his mind impended over him at no distant period. There he felt as if he still might have work to do, still might labour for the welfare and happiness of others, though his own part in life were nigh played out. Quitting home, and that for a lengthened period, seemed equivalent to abandoning his last remaining chance of usefulness on earth; and it was a severe trial of faith to acknowledge that in this, as in all

other things, God knew better than he what work was still to be exacted from him; and that when the means by which his health might be restored were plainly indicated, it would be presumption and disobedience to decline making use of them. Submission, however, was more and more becoming the prevailing temper of a mind once, with all its natural sweetness, proudly confident in its own judgment; and prayer and faith obtained the mastery over its lingering self-reliance.

“The duty,” he said, “which I had marked out for myself, must be given into other hands to do. Let mine be the hardest task of all, since to that I am plainly called; to submit to the conviction that ‘God doth not need *my* work.’ ”

It so happened that Captain Sarsfield, a relation by marriage of Lady Bertram’s, had just been appointed to the command of one of the ships of war on the Mediterranean station; and offered berths on board of her to his young connexion and his servant. The offer was gratefully accepted; and within a couple of weeks after the time we write of their embarkation was fixed to take place. William Bertram expected to see his family for a few days again,

at the termination of the holidays ; but in the meantime, he was alone in the house with his grand-aunt, Miss Margaret, who had remained there throughout the entire winter, but now only waited to see the last of her beloved nephew, ere returning to her home in Edinburgh.

It was a beautiful evening ; and the couch on which William had passed so many quiet hours was in its usual place, overlooking the sunset sea. Miss Margaret, in her usual place, sat with her knitting in her hands, which mechanically followed their accustomed task, whilst her eyes more frequently dwelt on his countenance. For several days he had been suffering from cough and fever ; which had been a good deal subdued by remedies as severe as his reduced strength would admit of being used ; and it was a comfort to her to perceive that though pale and weak, he was now free from the distressing restlessness attendant on such a state. A pause had taken place in their conversation ; and William gradually sank into a calm sleep, which had lasted about twenty minutes, when he awoke with a slight start.

“I scarcely knew where I was when I opened my eyes,” he said smiling. “I was dreaming, and so vividly ! of Kingsconnell !”

"I am not surprised at that," observed Miss Margaret, "after the long letter from Mr. Carmichael which you received this morning."

"No, very likely it was that caused my dream," said William, "more especially as it concerned a person mentioned very particularly in the letter."

"Miss Lockhart, you mean?" asked Aunt Margaret.

"Yes, I wish my dream had been true!" replied William. "I wish I could find myself, as I fancied I was just now, alone on the stone terrace with Beatrice Lockhart, asking her many questions,—and——. Shall I ever look on her sweet face again, I wonder?"

"My dear William! do not talk so!" exclaimed his aunt. "Please God, yes, you will see her, I trust, often again. You will excite yourself, and get feverish, my dear boy," she added, taking his hand; "pray do not allude to these things."

"No, dear Aunt Margaret, I am not at all feverish, I assure you. I feel very much better to-night, and it is rather a relief to me to talk of what occupies my thoughts. I wish I could have more patience; and be more content to leave the future in higher hands than mine.

Sometimes I am satisfied to do so, but this letter of Carmichael's has excited such a longing desire in my mind to be on the spot, on *that* spot, again, that it has renewed the struggle for submission in which I thought I had already conquered. He mentions that sweet girl as being so altered, as looking so pale, so sad, as to have excited the anxious interest of many people there ; in particular of those excellent old ladies at Sempilltower ; it is plain to me that he connects the change in her looks and spirits with Arthur ; and I cannot but do the same."

"Her father and Mrs. Lockhart are gone, are they not ?" asked Aunt Margaret.

"Long, long ago. They left the Grange, Carmichael wrote me, in the middle of January."

"And made no offer, I wonder, of taking those young creatures home with them ?"

"On the contrary, Captain Lockhart intimated his wish to be that they should remain with their grandmother. Carmichael thought the step-mother, (a vulgar, disagreeable person I suspect,) was jealous of her husband's affection for his daughters ; otherwise that Captain Lockhart was much grieved to leave them again. Carmichael mentions in his letter that he is just now applying for a ship ; which may denote either great zeal in his profession, or

disappointment in his home ties ; it were hard to say which."

"And so they will be left at the Grange, sweet pretty creatures ! all alone again with their aunts ? Well, I am most truly sorry for them," said Aunt Margaret. "Especially after what Arthur told you that your mother had said to him on the subject. I fear that when they all go back to Kingsconnell, it will make a very painful change to the Miss Lockharts, from the terms which used to exist amongst them."

"It will, no doubt it will," exclaimed William. "It is an idea which haunts me perpetually, with all its train of evils and sufferings. The cruelty to that lovely, gifted, sensitive girl, whose happiness is only too deeply involved in my brother ;—the fatal injury to him—consequent on such a tampering with an affection which has grown since his boyhood ; whichever way one looks, it is all distress and perplexity. And I see no way of escape. I have appealed to my mother,—in vain."

"You have, my dear William ?" exclaimed his aunt. "I had no idea of that."

"It was so, however," he replied. "I made the attempt about six weeks ago, at that time when I was so ill. I believe she was very

anxious about me; and I myself thought my sands were nearly run. It seemed a fit occasion to make a solemn appeal to her maternal feelings. I ventured it; and felt strengthened to say more than I thought I should ever have been able to utter, even to reminding my mother of the consequences of similar interference in my case. And I recalled to her a dark passage in our family history, of which my father and she have, I think, nearly succeeded in banishing the recollection, but which not the less truly is an abiding witness to the sin and madness of inordinate paternal ambition. I even suggested to her whether the startling resemblance between my brother and that ill-omened picture might not afford a warning on the subject, more powerful than any of mine?"

"Aye aye!" solemnly responded Miss Margaret. "It is a dark and awful story. And, well, William, what did your mother say?"

"Nothing," he sadly replied, "but what I might have anticipated. "I might as well have been silent. She *would not* see what I wished her to do. Her ambition for Arthur is unbounded; greater than it ever was for me; and it has blinded her to all beyond. I

was fain to leave the matter, at last, as one beyond my adjusting. Would that I could also rid myself of the dark anticipations which crowd upon me in my own despite! *I shall not see them fulfilled—but——*”

These last words were uttered in a low voice; but the senses of Miss Margaret Bertram had not yielded to the benumbing influence of age; and she distinctly heard them, though she attempted no reply. The tradition of their race's doom was one which, as the reader knows, she herself had been the first to relate to her grand-nephew; and many and earnest had been the discussions they had held upon it, in former days, while as yet it wore the character of something too dim and shadowy to be more than a solemn speculation. But the case was now altered. With all her faith,—with all the ideality of mind which invests such subjects with so painful an attraction, even when connected with feelings of pain; and with all her profound sense of the brief space which must inevitably separate her from the goal of all worldly interests, her fortitude was not equal to its discussion now. She could not have borne to hear from the lips

of one whom she so dearly loved,—a youth of such gifts, and such promise, the confirmation of all she read in his looks and manner ; and she clung, with a determination to see nothing which should interfere with it,—to the hope of his recovery. The short silence which succeeded this speech of his, was broken by himself.—

“All this,” he said, “would be nothing, if it were possible to depend on Arthur being true to his better self. I once thought it would. I thought the influence of an attachment to a creature like Beatrice Lockhart would be all powerful in steadying his will ; but other and powerful influences have been brought to bear against that one ; and during the few hurried interviews that we have had since his official engagements began, I have observed a change in him which renders me truly anxious. I do not think he has ever been the same since that Christmas at Milldenhanger.”

“It strikes me,” replied Miss Margaret, “that both your parents are very desirous to bring him into contact with Lord Mountjoye’s daughter.”

“Yes, that is very evident. He will meet with her this Easter too, I understand.”

“And has he talked much of her to you, William.”

“No, very little; and that little not in his usual open-hearted way. My information has been principally gathered from Emily, who dwells much on Arthur’s admiration of her friend Miss Adair; and,—she adds,—on her evident admiration of him. I have not seen the young lady since she was a child, but I find that she has grown up singularly attractive in person and manner. Not, I suspect, in intellect; there seems to be none of that charm in her which Beatrice Lockhart exercises over the mind. Miss Adair’s influence is a different one; and if it be of the nature I ascribe to it, it is not a good—not a wholesome influence for a youth so full of passion and sensibility as Arthur.”

“Your mother,” said Miss Margaret, “raves about her singing, as something quite extraordinary.”

“Yes, that seems to be her one talent. It is one which in some persons has more to do with the senses than with the intellect. I *feel*, more than *see*, the power that she has acquired over Arthur’s fancy. Not over his heart; there I acquit him. But there is a change in

him, and not for the better, and he is surrounded by an atmosphere of temptation. God alone knows how difficult it is for me to acquiesce in His will to remove me from the place where I can still in a measure watch over a brother whom I love so dearly, and whose character causes me so much anxiety."

"It is only for a time, my dear William. Try to have faith!" said Miss Margaret soothingly.

"I do try," he replied, "in humility and earnestness I strive for it. I know it is not for such as I am to murmur against the merciful hand which has led me all this way. I, who have to look back upon years of proud and obstinate blindness to the truth—years spent without God in the world,—am compelled to own myself justly punished now, by being forcibly withheld from serving Him in any way but one,—submission to the will which deprives me of the power of usefulness."

The parting between William Bertram and his brother, who joined him for one day only, previous to his embarkation, was a most painful one. All the impetuous feelings of Arthur were excited by the circumstances under which they took leave of each other;

and at that moment he would have sacrificed every worldly prospect for the privilege of being permitted to accompany William, watch over him in the hours of sickness and langour, and gather strength and wisdom from him at all times. But it was not so to be. To his own Master each man on this earth must stand or fall. The bitterness of the final hours came to an end. Sir Thomas, resolute to hope the best, to see no ultimate danger for his son, repressed the feelings of which he could not but be conscious, and even chid his lady and daughter for the agony of tears to which both had given way when William was fairly gone; Miss Margaret Bertram, her heart filled with thoughts more deep, more solemn still than grief, retired to order the necessary preparations for her immediate departure; and looked around her the while, in calm but profound sadness, on all the objects so long familiar, so long associated with the image of him who had so constantly occupied her thoughts for months back,—now to disappear at once and for ever, from her eyes, and be numbered among those things which have been, and can be no more for us. But to

her, as she said to herself, it mattered little. Her pilgrimage could not be much lengthened out. It was the young, whose trials and temptations were all to come, who were to be pitied. And more to be pitied than all was Arthur ; who having locked himself into his brother's usual sitting-room, there flung himself upon the vacant sofa, and gave way to a transport of sorrow, which there was no eye to check, and under whose influence he felt for the time as if no earthly pleasure could ever reach him more.

Within a month of that period, however, Arthur was immersed in the most exciting whirl of London gaiety ; where for the present we shall leave him ; and passing over some intervening months, shall resume the thread of our narrative in the September following ; when a large party was assembled at Kingsconnell ; whither the Bertram family had only returned in the beginning of August. Arthur did not arrive along with them. His official holidays were but of a few weeks' duration, and of those he spent the earlier part with a shooting party in Ross-shire. At the period of which we write he had not been quite a fortnight returned home.

CHAPTER III.

“ I have done penance for contemning love ;
Whose high imperious thoughts have punished me
With bitter fasts, with penitential groans,
With nightly tears, and daily heart-sore sighs ;
For, in revenge of my contempt of love,
Love hath chased sleep from my enthralled eyes,
And made them watchers of mine own heart's sorrow.”

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

“ MOTHER,” asked Captain Sempill one morning, “ whom do you expect to dinner to-day ? I am not sure that I know the exact number of the party.”

“ There are Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie, Reginald, and Georgina and Hector,” replied Mrs. Sempill, looking up from her knitting, as her son seated himself on the sofa by her side ; “ Sir James Warrender, Mr. Carmichael, Beatrice and Helen, you know, besides the party from Kingsconnell.”

“ And how many from Kingsconnell ? That is the point on which I am ignorant.”

“They are such an immense party there,” returned Mrs. Sempill, “that of course they cannot nearly all come. Neither Lady Mountjoye nor Miss Paget accepted, nor Lady Bertram of course.

“Do you expect young Loftus?”

“No, he declined too. I rather think he has gone to stay a couple of days at Mordington.”

“I am glad to hear it!” exclaimed Captain Sempill. “He is a young man to whom I have a most particular aversion, from the little I have seen of him. A heartless, sneering, premature man of the world; all the more dangerous that he is very clever, and even fascinating. A bad companion for Arthur Bertram, and I fear they are very much thrown together, for it seems he is in the Foreign Office too; and it strikes me he is a great admirer of Miss Bertram, which I am sorry for. She is a fine girl, naturally, though not improved latterly. None of them are.”

“Not my favourite, Arthur?” asked Mrs. Sempill. “I do like that lad. I should be grieved to think he was in bad hands.”

“So should I,” said her son, “for more people’s sake than his. And I like him, too,

exceedingly. But I certainly do not think him altered for the better. Do you expect him to-day?"

"I do. And Sir Thomas and Emily; Lord Mountjoye, and his beautiful daughter."

"Ah! she is a lovely creature, certainly, that Miss Adair! And you will be charmed with her singing. So that is the party? And Arthur is coming, is he?"

"He said so in his answer. And Penny is taken much up about it, Reginald; and I must own so am I. Beatrice Lockhart looks so pale and sad! We want to bring them together; for you recollect what Grace told me of her brother's being so angry before he left, about some gossip that had been repeated to him relating to Beatrice and Arthur? And if *he* heard it, you may depend upon it that it must have reached Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram too. There has been some interference, Penny and I think; for we gather from Grace (poor soul! she can keep nothing to herself, and she knows our sympathy) that the girls have not been invited to Kingsconnell, or seen any of the Bertrams this year. So we thought we should hazard the experiment of bringing them unexpectedly together."

“I declare,” exclaimed Captain Sempill, starting to his feet, and planting himself before the fire, “if Arthur Bertram behave ill to that sweet girl, I should be strongly tempted to shoot him !”

“My dear Reginald !” ejaculated his mother, aghast.

“Upon my soul I should, mother. Did you observe her pale face at church yesterday and last Sunday ?”

“Yes, I did,” sighed Mrs. Sempill. “Penny and I could not get it out of our heads. We wondered to see the girls in church ; they have gone so constantly to St. Michael’s of late ; and I wish they had been there those days ; for to see Arthur Bertram sitting with his eyes fixed on her the whole time of the first service, and then walking off home with that Mr. Loftus as soon as it was over, and not waiting for the second, or stopping to speak to a soul, it was so distressing. And I observed that Helen and she seemed purposely to avoid meeting any of the Bertrams, when they all came out of church. So different from what it used to be.”

“Do you think the Bertrams know that they are to meet the girls to-day ?” asked Captain Sempill.

“ I did not mean them to have known,” returned his mother ; “ but I was vexed to learn from your father that in the course of conversation yesterday with Miss Bertram, while we were waiting for our carriage, he had asked her whether she had lately seen her young friends at the Grange ; and when she answered no, he told her she would have that pleasure next day here. I would rather she had not known, if there is any coolness. But we shall see.”

“ We shall see,” musingly replied Captain Sempill. “ I wish to heaven George had allowed poor Helen to take charge of her nieces. It has been a sad business, first and last.”

The advance of summer had found Beatrice, though altered, indeed, from the bright and blooming creature of that time twelvemonth, less utterly wretched than she had been in the beginning of the year. Previous to the departure of her father, she had gained courage from despair, and unable longer to endure the weight of misery which his terrible words respecting Arthur had left upon her heart, and which she felt it impossible to relieve by imparting even to her sister, she had once more ventured an appeal to his pity, imploring him

to tell her whether he were satisfied of the truth of the accusation. And Captain Lockhart, upon whose mind a calmer cross-examination of his wife had left strong doubts of the authenticity of her tale, and whose very heart was bleeding over the pallid cheek and heart-broken aspect of the child he was forced to leave so unprotected, had then admitted the possibility of exaggeration in the reports conveyed to him, though still refusing to name his informant; but at the same time had laid his positive commands upon his daughter to abstain from an intercourse which exposed her to the bare chance of such things being said of her. The pain involved in anticipating this necessity, great though it was, Beatrice felt it comparatively easy to endure; and once permitted to entertain the idea of Arthur's innocence of the baseness imputed to him, her sanguine, hopeful spirit speedily convinced itself that all would be right in the end; and although nothing could restore her to the uncalculating happiness of the past, she felt strengthened to bear anything that did not include the worst of earthly pangs—"to be wroth with one we love." The peculiar nature of the trial she was destined to bear had not entered into her calculations.

She had very little imagined that a total cessation of intercourse on Emily's part was to succeed the intimate friendship which had once united them; or that all she should see of Arthur after his arrival at home, would be comprised in the mournful, intent, impassioned gaze with which Mrs. Sempill had observed him regarding her in church. Yet so it was; and day after day, as Helen reiterated her expressions of wonder at the meaning of this change, Beatrice, though she said little of it, looked paler and sadder, and felt more and more spiritless and heart-stricken.

The evening came, and the dinner party began to assemble at Sempilltower. Beatrice and Helen were amongst the first; and the eyes of Mrs. Sempill and Aunt Penny dwelt with undisguised satisfaction on their simple and elegant white muslin dresses, and the wreaths of scarlet geranium in their dark hair, which, with bouquets of the same flower, intermingled with white jessamine and myrtle leaves, formed their only ornaments. Both sisters looked lovely, Helen in particular; but the countenance of Beatrice had gained in interest what it had lost in brilliancy, by the depth of mournful thought which seemed

to speak from her eyes, and the paleness which imparted somewhat of a pure and spiritual character to her transparent complexion. The Laird smiled benevolently as he greeted his young guests, with all his characteristic pleasure in beholding beauty; and the Major, drawing Aunt Penny aside, imparted to her in an audible whisper that he had never before thought "the young one" so like her aunt, Mrs. George. The highest compliment this which the Major was capable of conceiving.

"You didn't perhaps hear that your friend, Mr. Arthur Bertram, was to be here to-day, Beatrice?" whispered Aunt Penny to the latter, after some of the company had arrived. The gentle spinster felt unable any longer to retain the secret, and her desire to give pleasure was rewarded by the brilliant glow which in an instant overspread the pale cheek of the young girl she addressed; and the light which sparkled in her eyes, seeming to transform her into a different being.

A few minutes afterwards the door opened, and Lord Mountjoye and Miss Adair, Sir Thomas, Mr. and Miss Bertram were announced. Lord Mountjoye, rather a fine-looking elderly man, but in no way remarkable,

entered with his daughter leaning on his arm, a vision, as she seemed, of surpassing loveliness; her tall, stately, queen-like form, pre-eminent in its easy undulating grace of movement, and the swan-like dignity of her snowy neck, set off to the utmost advantage by an exquisitely-fitting dress of white silk, with no other trimming than a fall of rich old point round the bosom, closed in front by a splendid ornament of turquoises and gold; her bright hair fastened behind by a circlet of the same. Emily Bertram followed with her father, her dark glowing loveliness, and rose-coloured dress advantageously contrasting with the looks and attire of her friend.

The eyes of Beatrice scarcely took in the forms on which every other in the room was rivetted, so intently was their gaze fixed upon the door behind them. There was a moment's pause after the entrance of Sir Thomas and his daughter, succeeded by that of—Hugh.

"I have to beg your forgiveness, Mrs. Sempill," said Sir Thomas, "for bringing my youngest son in his brother's place."

"We are delighted to see Mr. Hugh Bertram, as I hope he knows," replied Mrs.

Sempill, extending her hand to the youth with her benevolent smile ; “ but I hope no accident has occurred to deprive us of the pleasure of Mr. Arthur’s company ?”,

“ Nothing of consequence, I hope,” said Sir Thomas, turning to pay his respects to Miss Muirhead, who could scarcely command her countenance sufficiently to conceal her acute disappointment, enhanced by vexation with herself for having misled her young friend by vain hopes.

“ My brother, Mrs. Sempill,” said Emily, “ would have written himself to explain his non-appearance, but he was so unequal to it, that I told him I was sure you would accept of a verbal apology. He complained of not feeling well in the morning, but persisted, contrary to advice, in riding out with us. We took rather a long round, managed to lose our way amongst those cross-lanes on the other side of St. Michael’s; and finding ourselves late, galloped home very fast; the consequence of which was, that by the time we reached Kingsconnell, Arthur’s head ached so dreadfully, and he became so faint, that he was obliged to lie down, and give up all idea of dressing, or stirring from the sofa for the evening. He desired

me to tell you how very sorry he was, and how much disappointed."

"Not more so than we are, I am sure, my dear Miss Bertram," said Mrs. Sempill, with truth. "I would rather have owed the pleasure of seeing Mr. Hugh to any other cause. But I hope this attack of illness may prove to be nothing serious."

Emily now perceiving Beatrice and Helen, advanced to greet them with all her former warmth and cordiality of manner. The former, who had been near enough to hear her account of Arthur's indisposition, felt that heart-stricken sensation which renders almost all things alike indifferent; and scarce was conscious of what Helen most keenly felt, the discrepancy between Emily's conduct now that they met, and her total neglect at all other times. For Beatrice, the enjoyment of the evening was gone; and all around her seemed like a troubled dream. She was aroused from it by finding herself seated next to Hugh Bertram at the dinner table; and in spite of her desolate feelings, could not help being interested in the conversation of the intelligent boy. There was a tone of gentleness and good feeling in all he said, which at times reminded her of William;

and a soothing degree of quiet kindness in his manner; not to mention the strong family likeness to both his brothers; which, in spite of his possessing fewer personal attractions than either, ran through all he did, and said, and looked. He talked to her of William, and lamented Arthur's absence. "He knew it was a sad disappointment to him, but he really was very unwell. He had overdone himself at the moors; such a sudden change from the life he had been leading in London! Arthur could do nothing in moderation." Mr. Carmichael all this time sat opposite to Beatrice, and dwelt upon her altered looks with emotions of pain, which deadened his perceptions of what every one else at table, even Captain Sempill, was regarding with such admiration—the beauty of Mary Adair. Her spell of resistless fascination captivated all around, with the solitary exceptions of Mr. Carmichael and the Major, who, true to his first impressions, still adjudged the palm of attraction to "Mrs. George." And on the retreat of the female part of the company to the drawing-room, Beatrice was the first to acknowledge the charm of her beauty and her grace. It was a pleasure to sit unobserved and gaze at her, and watch her bewitching smile in speak-

ing. Not that her conversation appeared in any way remarkable for brilliancy, or that she exerted herself to please—at least whilst there were none but ladies present; but to look at her was enough. And when she was prevailed upon to sing,—when the whole magnificent volume of passionate sound broke from her lips, enhanced in its effect by the beauty of her up-raised eyes, her white swelling throat, and exquisite hands, Beatrice forgot herself, ceased to recollect her own personal feelings, and sat absorbed in a trance of unenvying admiration. It was not until the harmony had ceased, that she remembered, with a sudden thrill of anguish, *who* was at present living in daily and hourly contact with that enchanting creature. This remembrance was awakened by hearing the name of Arthur mentioned in the course of some badinage which was going on beside the pianoforte, around which the young ladies and all the younger gentlemen of the party were collected.

“Your brother little knows what he has missed by not joining the party, Miss Bertram,” observed Sir James Warrender.

“Only that Mr. Arthur Bertram has the advantage, if it be one, of hearing the same

every evening at present," observed Miss Adair.

"Nay, nay, Mary," interposed Emily, "you know how frequently of late, Arthur has been almost on his knees to petition for *Che farò senza Euridicè?* and how cruelly you have persisted in refusing him."

"And no very great wonder, Emily," replied her friend, "when you consider how often I was compelled to sing it for him last Christmas. I chose it to-night on purpose, because he was not here; for I have laid my commands on him to ask for it no more these twelve months."

"And do you find Arthur Bertram a willing slave?" smilingly inquired young Guthrie. "Does he ever slight your commands?"

"I must say it would not be easy, Miss Adair," observed Captain Sempill.

"It would not, indeed," was the thought of Beatrice, as she withdrew from the circle, and sat down apart. "How could I dream of Arthur's remembering me with such a creature near him? How can I wonder that it should be so? And I do not wonder. I never felt worthy of being loved by him, except for my own deep love, and he could not see into my heart, and read that. If he has learned to love

her, I hope—yes,—I hope she may render him happy. I could soon love her too, I think. But she has no need of *my* affection. How should she?”

It was the exaggerated, but noble feeling of a generous and unselfish heart, which prompted these thoughts, however little weak human nature might have been able to act up to them. They imparted an expression so pure, so elevated to her young and ingenuous countenance, as could not fail to strike the eyes which from an opposite corner were dwelling unobserved upon her. Mr. Carmichael mentally contrasted her girlish, undeveloped, yet refined and spiritualized aspect, with the rich and radiant beauty of Mary Adair; who, although actually more than a year younger, looked, beside her, like a woman near one still almost a child; and a woman in the full pride of voluptuous loveliness; but not, in his estimation, in any respect to be compared to Beatrice. This opinion, however, he was well aware, would by most persons be scouted as an extraordinary deficiency in taste; yet the longer he gazed, the more he became confirmed in it.

At the very moment, while these thoughts respecting Arthur were passing through the mind

of Beatrice, he himself was lying in a disturbed and unquiet slumber, on a sofa in his dressing-room; the door - of which softly opening, admitted his mother, who seated herself by his side. A few minutes after, Arthur started awake, and perceived her.

"Do you feel better, my dear Arthur?" Lady Bertram whisperingly asked. "Is the pain in your head gone? No, really? Let me bathe it for you again."

She gently applied ether to his temples, but without saying more, until Arthur thanking her, assured her that he felt much revived.

"But had you not better go to bed, my dear boy?" she asked.

"It is of no use," replied Arthur, "I cannot sleep. I did not close my eyes last night."

"You are over-fatigued, Arthur, completely knocked up," said Lady Bertram anxiously. "You have not been yourself since you returned from the Highlands. And how very foolish to take that long ride to-day, so little fit for it as you were!"

"It is not that, mother, you know it is not." He arose from the sofa, and stood leaning against the mantel-piece. "I have been giving orders," he said, after a pause, "to

have my things packed. I mean to be off to-morrow."

"To-morrow, Arthur?" Lady Bertram gazed at her son, as if doubtful of his sanity. "What do you mean, my dear boy?"

"What I say," he replied. "My time is nearly out."

"Why, Arthur, you told me only yesterday that you had still a fortnight to be with us. What can you possibly be thinking of? Do you consider the disrespect to me, to your father, to our guests, of flying off in this unaccountable manner, without the shadow of a pretext? Let me beg you will say no more of it."

"It is no use, mother, I cannot remain! I am bound by a fatal promise to you, and I have miscalculated my own strength. I cannot stay here. It will be wiser in you to let me go, and say nothing to deter me."

"You do not mean to tell me, Arthur," sternly enquired Lady Bertram, "that you have broken, or meditate breaking, the promise on condition of which alone your father consented to discharge your gambling debts? You do not mean this?"

"No, mother!" replied her son, proudly

drawing himself up. "I do not. My promise, the promise wrung from me by the effects of my own accursed folly, is still inviolate. But I warn you that I cannot remain here and keep it. I cannot live near Beatrice Lockhart, and refrain from an intercourse once the happiness—the blessing—of my life. The struggle in my mind, since I last night learned from Emily that I had it in my power to meet her this evening, had I been able to keep my engagement, has been—I do not attempt to describe it!"

"My dear Arthur," soothingly interposed his mother, "you were ill at any rate. Your hand is burning at this moment," she added, rising and taking it in her's. Lie down, and compose yourself. You must not talk on these exciting subjects to-night, for you are very far from well."

"If I am," he replied, "it is from no other cause. Do not deceive yourself, mother; and do not forbid me to tell you the truth for once. I have no wish to recur to it again. My own madness in yielding to temptation, and to the craving for excitement which has grown upon me since the happy dream of my boyhood was dispelled by you, having involved me,

already, in that fatal maze of debts of honour, which left me no resource but to apply to my father through you, I know that I have placed myself in your power, and so you have made me feel.’

“And how then have I exercised my power, Arthur?” haughtily asked Lady Bertram, confronting her son. Have I shown any want of love for you, in persuading your father to forgive what you may well call your madness, and to discharge obligations which must have disgraced you. Or is it want of love which induced me to make it an indispensable condition of this assistance, that you should abstain from an intercourse most injurious to the object of your imaginary attachment, and which could only end in involving you, with your gifts, advantages, and prospects, in an inferior and degrading connexion. The day will yet come, my dear son, when you will render me greater justice than you are now disposed to do on this subject.”

“Pardon me, mother, if I have spoken disrespectfully,” said Arthur, over whom her habitual influence struggled with his sense of right. “I believe that you have acted, as you think, for the best. I know that you can have

no other motive than affection for me. But, I repeat it, you are not aware of the extent to which my happiness was involved in what my own act has now assisted in denying me. I must quit this neighbourhood for the present, or break my promise,—or lose my reason. Elsewhere I can manage to forget,—to drown thought,—no matter how; and perhaps in time that may become habitual with me; but not *now*, and not *here*. You will be wiser not to oppose my departure.”

“I will not, then, Arthur; but one day,—one other day, you will not refuse me? Indeed, my dear boy, you are in no state to travel to-morrow.”

“Perhaps not,” said Arthur, feeling the reaction of the violent excitement which had already caused him actual bodily indisposition. He threw himself again upon the sofa; and his mother silently applied herself to bathing his throbbing temples; then at length, finding him somewhat calmer, left him, after exacting his promise of retiring to bed immediately.

It is but justice to Lady Bertram to say that with all her talent and penetration, she did not thoroughly enter into the depths of the sensitive and excitable nature with whose fine

springs she was thus rashly tampering. Her character was too worldly, too *outward*, as it were; she lived too much amongst external things, and too little in the habit of meditation, to reason upon the mental peculiarities of others, even of those whom she fancied her self most completely to understand. Her more determined will gave her an ascendancy over her son, which blinded her to the fact that there were heights and depths in his mind beyond her fathoming. In one thing on which she had reckoned she found herself not mistaken, his liability to the peculiar influence at present brought to bear upon him. When Arthur came down stairs, late in the following day, pale, languid, and, disinclined to exertion, his resolutions of immediate departure melted like frost-work in the sun, beneath the eye and the smile of Mary Adair. It was perfectly true, as his brother William had divined; she had failed to attract his pre-occupied heart, but completely subjugated his fancy, when in her presence; he felt, beneath the power of her eye, as if all free will were taken from him. The day passed in a voluptuous dream, as, reclining in an easy-chair, he gazed in silence on her graceful movements, listened to the soft

and soothing tones in which she occasionally addressed him, or remained lost in a trance of extatic enjoyment, when, after repeated assurances that "her noise would not really be too much for his poor head," she consented to sing to him; not in her magnificent *bravura* style; but in the low and passionate tone which she well knew how to contrast with it, and in which her wondrous gift of melody assumed a yet more powerful sway over the feelings. And day succeeded day; each morning seeing him arise from unrefreshing sleep, and fixed in his purpose of breaking the chain which bound him; and night succeeded night, and found him still retained a captive.

At last it came to an end. Another Sunday did Arthur repair to the House of God, for the purpose of rendering it a temple to his own idol. Again he sat, withdrawn from the front of the gallery, his eyes bent with impassioned earnestness, on her whom he might nowhere else behold;—and again did Beatrice yield to the temptation,—the uncontrollable desire to see him once more, and desert her own Church for purposes equally unhallowed with his. The first service came to an end. So far as either was concerned, it need never have begun;

and with its conclusion Arthur Bertram disappeared; and light and beauty went with him from Beatrice's mental heaven, and left her to a dark chaos of bewildering thoughts, which surrounded, blinded, deafened her, during the remainder of Divine service, accompanied her homeward path, and haunted her throughout the unblest evening.

On the following morning Dr. Chisholm called at the Grange, and in the course of gossip, announced the unexpected departure of Mr. Arthur Bertram from Kingsconnell. It was very odd; very sudden. The young gentleman had been in church; they must all have seen him there; and he went home after the first service. The rest of the party had remained for the second,—and a large party they were! everybody was there, the doctor believed, who was in the house; and after church, they had driven two or three miles round to show some of the ladies the view of St. Michael's from the Whinny-hill. This made them rather late of getting home; and when they arrived, lo and behold! the first news that met them was that Mr. Arthur had gone off in the Glasgow mail, which passed the gates half an hour before! His servant

remained behind to pack up and follow him next day. He had left a note for Lady Bertram, in which she said he had announced to her that a letter from some one, but Dr. Chisholm could not clearly make out whom, had caused this sudden move.

Many were the exclamations which followed this narrative.

“And did Dr. Chisholm know,” Miss Grace at length anxiously enquired, “when there was a chance of Mr. Arthur coming back?”

“Oh! goodness knows that, Miss Grace!” replied the doctor, proud of superior information. “He is fairly chained to the oar now, and we may think ourselves fortunate if we get a sight of his face once a year, and may-be not that. There are not many holidays going at the Foreign Office, they say; but, moreover, Sir Thomas means to apply for an appointment abroad for Mr. Arthur, as soon as he can take it; and Sir Thomas has high interest, having held various diplomatic situations himself. Then there is Lord Mountjoye’s interest. Mr. Arthur is sure of that, they say——” Dr. Chisholm coughed, and interrupted himself, with a side glance at Beatrice; who sat, still

as a statue, in her usual window, her head bent over her work.

“Anything been heard of Mr. Bertram lately, Doctor?” enquired the old lady.

“Yes, ma’am, a letter only on Saturday, from Malta. Mr. Bertram writes in good spirits, and seems decidedly better; in the meantime, he is to pass the winter in Egypt and Syria, and visit the Holy Land. I fear we shall see little of the family this winter either. Lady Bertram told me to-day that they all go southward, in the course of another fortnight, and will not be back again till next summer. I rather think there is some scheme on foot for spending the winter in Paris. It’s a pity of us here! a great loss to the neighbourhood. They’re all to be so scattered, you see; and Mr. Hugh returns to Sandhurst immediately. My sister does nothing but lament over the change at Kingsconnell. What will she say when I go home and tell her that Mr. Arthur is gone?”

CHAPTER IV.

Away—away to thy sad and silent home!

Weep bitter tears upon thy desolated hearth!

Watch the flitting shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth!

* * * but till the spells shall flee,

Which that house and heath and garden made dear to
thee ere while,

Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings
are not free

From the music of two voices, and the light of one sweet
smile."

P. B. SHELLEY.

GONE! Arthur Bertram gone! Gone without a word, without a sign,—without a prospect, almost, of meeting again! Beatrice could realise no other idea; and this one was like some dark nightmare,—something felt, not seen; dim, and indistinct, and terrible. She quietly escaped to the school-room, closed the door, and sat down, and tried to think, to feel,—to weep,—but she could do none of these. She was stunned. She did not yet distinctly

feel that she should see him no more ; but the desolating consciousness dawned upon her by degrees ; and long, and dark, and agonizing was the conflict through which, unsuspected by all around, her spirit passed in consequence.

It must be remembered that Beatrice had no clue to Arthur's feelings ; that she knew nothing of what had passed between him and his mother ; nothing beyond the fact that after as much devotedness, short of an explicit avowal of affection, as it was possible for man to show to woman,—and after a leave taking full of unspoken but unmistakable tenderness, he had returned to her near neighbourhood only to shun and avoid her, and that in the most marked manner. It was thence impossible for her to draw any other than one of two conclusions ; either that wrought upon by his own and his mother's disgust with the coarseness of her relations, and the vulgar pretension of her step-mother, he had weakly suffered himself to be persuaded to give her up, and had already nearly forgotten her in a new attachment ; or else that he had never loved her at all ; that in her ignorance, simplicity, and imprudence, she had given her whole heart to one who did not appreciate the

gift; to whom her too-evident partiality had been the amusement of his unoccupied hours; and in whose eyes her fatal facility in admitting his visits and attentions must have compromised her in a manner torturing to be thought of. And then would arise the remembrance of that fatal night, that terrible conversation with her father; a memory which, though long and sedulously repelled and stifled, could not be extinguished so entirely, as not to be awakened into torturing life by recent circumstances, affording as they seemed to do, too strong a corroboration of its truth. Anon, to counterbalance all this, there would be a thousand recollections of an opposite nature; a thousand reminiscences of words, and looks, and actions, which told a very different tale;—down to that last inexpressibly mournful gaze which had been so immoveably bent upon her countenance, throughout every one of those unhappy Sundays when Arthur had appeared in his old place in church; and when alone they had looked in each others faces, elsewhere unseen. These were combined with memories more convincing still, of the words and looks, and actions of his brothers;—of William; who had always treated her more as a sister than

any thing else; even of the consideration manifested towards her by the young Hugh. And thus did her restless spirit, like the troubled sea, keep tossing on from despair to hope,—from doubt to assurance,—and back to doubt and to despair again. And all this in secret, in the depths of her own heart—bearing an outward aspect of calmness;—often of gaiety; till as time rolled on, the effects of the internal struggle began at last to manifest themselves on the outward frame; and the tardily-awakened perception of this in those around her, was the means of bringing about an unexpected change in winter, in her's and Helen's existence.

Miss Babie Chisholm said many things expressive of regret, and dropped many mysterious hints and surmises when she learned that Arthur Bertram had departed; but she found more to say some months after, when winter had sunk darkly down upon the neighbourhood, and “Youth and Life were gone away,” not only from Kingsconnell but from the Grange.

“Deary me! Miss Susie,” was her salutation one Sunday morning in January, to the niece of the late minister, who had taken up her abode in a neat small house very near

the Doctor's, "deary me! You were not wise to come home from Edinburgh at this time of the year. You'll find us all uncommonly dull here."

"I like my own fire-side, Miss Babie, and I'm no great hand at visiting," was the meek Miss Susie's reply. "But what has come over ye, Ma'am."

"Oh! we're just in a deserted state." And herewith followed a narrative of all the movements of the Bertram family, as already announced by Dr. Chisholm. "And then the Grange, Miss Susie! I declare it's dismal to see it, now the young ladies are away."

The latter circumstance being one of which Miss Susie had not heard, Miss Babie proceeded to inform her that so far back as the end of November, the younger Miss Lockharts, had gone to spend the winter with their cousin, Miss Alexander, whose inmates they still were, and that Dr. Chisholm had been greatly rejoiced at this circumstance,—for though he was very cautious in talking of his patients, he could not conceal from her that he was most seriously uneasy about Miss Beatrice.

"Miss Beetress, Ma'am? I'm greatly distressed to hear that, Miss Babie!" exclaimed her hearer in a tone of warm interest.

"Yes, indeed, Ma'am. We were all greatly distressed in the neighbourhood. Indeed there was a great deal said about it, far and near, for I'm sure you must remember, Miss Susie, how ill Miss Beetress looked from the time that a certain young gentleman went away? And I've heard more on *that* subject than I'm at liberty to repeat. People were all taken up about the business, for the young ladies are great favourites in the county. And Mr. Arthur's a universal favourite too, you see."

"He's a good looking lad," observed Miss Susie in her quiet tone.

"Good looking, Miss Susie! I can tell you it's admitted on all hands that there's not been the like of Mr. Arthur Bertram seen since the days of Douglas, Duke of Hamilton. The fine ladies in London are all pulling caps for him, I'm told."

"But that's no excuse for him behaving ill to Miss Beetress Lockhart, Miss Babie."

"Far be it from me, Miss Susie, to say so! And as far be it from me to accuse Mr. Arthur. If there was blame in the matter, Ma'am, it was laid at another door than his. Sir Thomas is a proud man. But it is not for me in my seeteation, to repeat the idle clatters

that go about. Only the Doctor was called in to Miss Beetress, about Martinmas; and not before it was time; for she was just wasted to a shadow."

"And what was her complaint, Miss Babie?"

"She had none Miss Susie; neither cough, nor pain, nor any thing. It was just like a dwining. But as the Doctor said,—it's not the first time people have pined away and died, without any pain. How it might have ended I don't know; but Miss Alexander insisted on the young ladies coming to her; which they did; and the Doctor has been attending Miss Beetress there, and thinks much better of her now. Miss Carruthers told him, only the last time he was there, that she had never seen Miss Alexander so taken up with any thing, or so much interested, as she was in Miss Beetress Lockhart."

"Aye, aye? Well, its but natural, Ma'am."

"Not so natural as you would think to Miss Alexander, Miss Susie. Miss Carruthers was terrified when some of the county gentry first began talking of this business before her; and blaming Mr. Arthur (though I do not say the blame lies at his door) for his conduct. She thought it would be such an affront to

Miss Alexander to hear that one of her kith and kin had been slighted. But quite the contrary. She took it up most warmly; was quite grieved, and distressed about it; and never rested till she had the young ladies settled with herself for the winter. And as the Doctor says, it's wonderful what change of air and scene will do for young people. And there's Mr. Carmichael, I declare!" exclaimed Miss Babie, interrupting herself as they entered the church-yard gate. "I was afraid we were late, Miss Susie, but we'll do."

"Mr. Carmichael's looking ill, I think, Miss Babie," observed her friend, as the clergyman after bowing to them, entered the church."

"He's greatly changed, Miss Susie. And there's a great deal of dispeace in the parish. The Doctor was just saying, he thought things had never been right in Kingsconnell Parish since that preaching at the Linns of Connell. It set every body off the hooks."

A knot of parishioners, profiting by the cheerful frosty sunshine, to linger for a few minutes' talk around the gate, were eagerly discussing the same subject,—that, namely; of the dissensions in the parish, at the same moment with Miss Babie and her companion.

“Ken ye, John Teugh,” said one speaker, turning to another of the group, an old man in a grey plaid and blue bonnet,—“if the minister and Thammas Brodie’s made it up yet?”

“I’m thinkin’ no,” returned the senior. The sough gaed that Thammas suld hae tellt the minister he would resign the eldership suner nor see the Cutty Stool set up i’ the Kirk again! and the minister he stood up rael pooerfu’ for the awncient discipleen o’ the Kirk;—an’ nae doot but there’s something in that.”

“Aye,” put in another; “there’s a dael in’t. That was what Peter Macfie said, and Bauldie Thamson, at the Kirk Session. They kind o’ sided wi’ the minister. But the schulemaister, Maister Pawmieloof,—he was clean again them. And Thammas Brodie, they tell me, is nouthar to haud nor to bind.”

“Weel, aweel,” interposed another village oracle, “I’m no clear but the minister has the richts o’ the controversy. And I wad just rede Thammas Brodie to ca’ canny, an’ no set fock speakin’!”

“Troth, ye may say sae, Eben Geddes!” exclaimed a female voice, as a pair of matrons came up with the party. “I mind fu’ weel when his sister Jean——”

But at this crisis, "the ringing-in" of the bell fortunately interrupted the conversation, as it threatened to assume a personal and scandalous character,—and compelled the interlocutors to wend their way inside the church.

A change had indeed come over the outward appearance of Mr. Carmichael. He looked, within a short time, an older and graver man,—thinner and more sallow even than of old. For this, it might be, there were other and deeper reasons than the dissensions in his parish, grievous though he felt them to be. But to these reasons no human being besides himself possessed the clue. That, as a hopeless dream, was buried in his own heart. He busied himself, in devout earnestness of purpose, with the spiritual welfare of his parishioners,—passing his days in laborious efforts of the kind, and his nights in study; and gradually plunged more and more deeply into those bewildering and entrancing speculations, and these schemes for the renovation of discipline in the Kirk, which were at that time occupying the minds of Edward Irving and his followers. It was by means like these, indeed, that the imaginative and reverential men who turned aside after that dazzling meteor-light, strove

to allay the craving which possessed them for unity and rest; a craving which the Communion, to which circumstances, not natural bias, had attached them, afforded no means of satisfying. Many were the schisms which had arisen amongst the elders, in consequence of their minister's new views,—some of which, too deadly to be quelled, had resulted in accessions to the Dissenting congregation at Gatesford; and a busy woman was Miss Menie Mark, nor less so Miss Willie Lockhart, so soon as each successive feud became known. But none of these things moved Mr. Carmichael. He proceeded on his way in perfect singleness of intention, and with the most conscientious desire to fulfil the duties entrusted to him; and in endeavours after usefulness, and personal holiness, sought to forget the solitude of his earthly path.

CHAPTER V.

“How shall I woo her?—I will stand
Beside her when she sings,
And watch that fine and fairy hand
Flit o’er the glittering strings;
And I will tell her I have heard,
Tho’ sweet her song may be,
A voice whose every whispered word
Was more than song to me.”

AUTHOR OF “LILLIAN.”

THE scene of our narrative shifts once more to Milldenhanger, where in the end of the month of August, that same year, was assembled a numerous party, of which Mr. Ingram and Arthur Bertram again were members; and where, one day, the particular friend and confidante of the former gentleman, Lady Lucy Greville, dined, in company with several other county neighbours.

This lady, as was usually the case, found herself seated next to Mr. Ingram during

dinner, and again in the course of the evening, when the party was dispersed amongst the various apartments of the suite. Mary Adair had just been singing, and Arthur was the nearest to her amongst the knot of entranced listeners surrounding her harp; and as she now sat, the centre of the group, it was to him that she most frequently and pointedly addressed herself.

"I should say," remarked Lady Lucy to her companion, that there was a mutual admiration there, Mr. Ingram?"

"I think so," he replied. "Miss Adair makes no secret, indeed, of her preference for Mr. Bertram's society. It is displayed in such a manner as must be flattering in no common degree to any young man, from so beautiful a woman; and in his case it evidently increases the force of the spell, the *fascination*, which enthralles him. For I hold to my first opinion, Lady Lucy. It is fascination, not love, on his part. Chemically speaking, the attraction of repulsion is there, but it is overpowered by that of cohesion."

"Love, or fascination, be it," answered the somewhat matter-of-fact Lady Lucy, "I should think it will come to the same thing in the

end; and I cannot control my astonishment, I must say, when I see it. What can Lord and Lady Mountjoye be thinking of? Mr. Bertram is no match for their daughter."

"Why, they might certainly aspire—in short, there is nothing to which the parents of Mary Adair might not aspire for her. But you overlook one fact, my dear Lady Lucy. Miss Adair is as completely the controller of her own destinies at home, as she is of those of others abroad. Her influence over her parents is absolute. I really do not think she has ever known restraint in her life. And then recollect, they do not see all that we cool lookers-on do. In their eyes young Bertram is only one of an host surrounding their daughter. All the mute language of the eye, which is manifest to me, because I am on the watch for such things, is lost upon them."

"So much the worse!" said Lady Lucy, "and not what I should have expected from Lady Mountjoye. Is Mr. Bertram's elder brother still alive?"

"Still, but I imagine in a hopeless state of health. This, you know, materially alters his prospects."

"Yes, but nevertheless, there is, as you

say, scarcely a match in the kingdom too high for Mary Adair. I happen to know, however, that during the last season she declined two unexceptionable proposals; so that I suppose she must have things a good deal her own way. Mr. Bertram is certainly very attractive."

"Singularly so. He is a youth whom I feel disposed to grieve over. I trace the progress of so much mischief in his character since the last time I met with him here; so much of which the germs alone were visible then; and yet withal he is a creature whom it is impossible to help liking and admiring. He has been surrounded by temptation in London these two last seasons. My nephew, Charles Ingram Thoresby, who is in the Foreign Office, you know, is well acquainted with him, and says he is an universal favourite. But I have reason to suspect that he has been excessively extravagant and thoughtless; *wild*, as it is called, and something more, I fear. Certainly there is a change, a great change, in the expression of his countenance since we last met; that bright, open look he had is gone. And other things,—trifling indications of a mind over-excited, restless, I should say unhappy, strike me. It is well, perhaps, that he is

leaving London. And yet the dissipated, gambling Court of —— is no desirable exchange either; especially as I have heard it whispered that he has already been tempted more than once to high play.”

“Is his appointment, then, to Lord ——’s embassy?”

“It is. He told me this morning that he means to start for Scotland to-morrow, to pass a short while at home, previous to his departure.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by a movement amongst the younger portion of the company. A lady seated herself at the piano-forte, and began playing a spirited waltz. Several couples instantly arose, and Arthur Bertram offered his arm to Mary Adair.

“One last waltz,” he whispered, as they took their places. “To-morrow I shall not be here to claim your hand.”

The dance began, and as usual, every eye in the room was attracted by the beauty and grace of that one couple. Again and again they paused, and yet again resumed the waltz, as if unable to relinquish what they were not soon destined to enjoy together again. His arm encircling Mary’s form, the golden ringlets

that fell upon her snowy neck almost touching his cheek in their light wavy motion, her voluptuous beauty and matchless grace displayed in the fulness of their perfection, Arthur's brain felt whirling, his soul in tumult;—he was no longer master of himself. Throughout the whole evening, indeed, he had been like one moving in a bewildering dream. The idea of returning to Kingsconnell, to the neighbourhood of Beatrice, the memory of that never-to-be-forgotten love, the Eros of his existence,—contending with the Anteros which led him captive in the presence of Mary Adair,—all this was combined with recollections of his elder brother's letters of affectionate warning and remonstrance, with self-accusing thoughts of what his recent life had been, and bitter ones contrasting his present with his former self. Soul and sense, passion and reason, were at war within; and over all was diffused a vague, dreamy, painful consciousness that he was on the eve of quitting the presence of the enchantress who had acquired such power over him; that he was that night gazing on her beauty for the last time; perhaps in truth the last for him; for he could not blind himself to the fact that more than one amongst the

guests in her father's house manifested a more particular devotion to her, whom all admired ; and that their pretensions were far superior to his. Yet had Arthur Bertram been at that moment asked, in sober seriousness, whether or not he actually wished to become the husband of Mary Adair, he would at once have answered in the negative. The power she exercised was over his senses alone. Beyond her one wonderful gift of music, and the inexplicable influence which belonged to her, she had no talent, and Arthur had known what it was to love where the gifts of intellect, imagination, and feeling, were combined with personal attraction. So he could feel apart from Mary ; but beside her, a spirit of jealous rivalry took possession of his whole nature, at the sight of her power over other men ; and served still farther to inflame his fancy, and obscure his reason.

At last the waltz was over ; and whilst a quadrille was being formed, to the proffered playing of another musician, some of the couples who had been dancing strolled into the other rooms. Arthur, still retaining Miss Adair's arm in his, drew her gently on till

they reached the doors of the conservatory, into which one of the drawing-rooms opened. They entered its dimly-lighted alleys, which presented a soft contrast to the brilliancy of the apartments beyond, and slowly sauntering on, came at last to a pause beside a fountain, which trickled from an urn borne by a marble Naiad, into a basin of the same material. On the edge of this they stood leaning for a few minutes; the eyes of Arthur fixed in silent admiration on the exquisite form before him, as she bent over the rim, and dipped her white and taper fingers in the cool water. At last she raised her eyes, and looked him in the face. A thrill pervaded his whole frame as she did so.

"You go to-morrow morning, early, Mr. Bertram, don't you?" she inquired.

"I do," said Arthur, "very early. I must say farewell to-night."

"It is a word I do not like to say," returned she. "When shall we waltz together again?"

"When, indeed?" he exclaimed. "But that is a question for me to ask,—not you."

"Why, Mr. Bertram? What do you mean?"

"Why?" he replied with vehemence.

“Why, but because my place may soon be supplied.

‘The moon can look
On many a brook,
The brook beholds no moon but this.’”

“Do you really think so?” The question was asked in a low voice; and again those bewildering eyes were fixed upon him. His passionate gaze met her’s;—for one moment they were cast down; then again uplifted to his face with that strange, peculiar glance, which it was scarce in man to withstand.

Arthur did not withstand it. His brain reeled; an intoxicating whirl of ideas crowded upon him; ere he knew that he had done it, he had seized her hand, and said—he never could recall what. * * * * *

All was confusion from that moment;—a wild tumult of strangely-troubled delight was all that he could remember, when in his own chamber that night he dismissed his servant, and flung himself into a chair by an open window, resting his burning forehead on its cold ledge. He could recall no distinct words; nothing but a dim impression that he had said more than he meant,—more than he felt; and that all he said had been met—more than

met—by a creature whose entrancing beauty left him powerless to retract, had such a thing been otherwise possible ; though now that her eye was no longer upon him, he felt that he would have given worlds to undo what had been done. Something he remembered of covering the hand he had held with passionate kisses ;—something of being startled by approaching footsteps, and of parting with an understanding, rather implied than expressed, that although his feelings were entirely reciprocated, nothing must for the present be said upon the subject to the parents of either party. For one single instant he had pressed that matchless form to his heart ; and then they had separated. But a mist was over all. In the distraction of his thoughts, and the tumult of opposing feelings, Arthur had had recourse, after the female part of the household had left the gentlemen below stairs, to a remedy which of late, under the influence of many self-imposed troubles, had become too little strange to him. He had sought to drown reflection in deep draughts of wine ; and although the fatal expedient did not absolutely affect his reason, it completed the bewildering confusion of his ideas ; and added to the evil it was meant

to mitigate. Hours of that night passed, and morning was far advanced, ere he aroused himself from the wild waking dreams which had usurped the place of refreshing sleep, and awoke to the consciousness of his impending departure; and those calmer waking thoughts were not those of peace or joy. But it was done. He had uttered that which never can be recalled again; and nothing was left him but the usual resource of those like himself, creatures of impulse, slaves of the present hour,—namely, to leave the future to be directed by circumstances; and let the current of events bear him along with it as it flowed.

Arthur reached Kingsconnell in the afternoon of a beautiful and intensely-hot day; and alighting from the mail at the south lodge, learned from the gate-keeper that there was no one at home. It appeared that, owing to the miscarriage of a letter, announcing his intended arrival at that time, he was not expected till some days later; and Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, Emily, and even Hugh, were at that moment absent on a visit at Mordington, the seat of a nobleman, at the other extremity of the county. Arthur

heard the intelligence without any very keen emotion of regret. He felt heated, fatigued, and out of spirits; and was not sorry to anticipate a solitary evening. Sending his servant on to the house to announce his arrival, he slowly sauntered up the long avenue, enjoying the delicious coolness, and gazing on the deep shadows cast by the huge trees upon the velvet grass. As he advanced, the long unbroken line of the avenue disclosed in the distance the figure of a man approaching from the direction of the house; and then gradually approximating to each other, Arthur recognised Mr. Carmichael.

A cordial greeting was exchanged between them; and the clergyman explained that he was at that moment returning from a visit to a sick man, the son of one of the keepers, at a cottage in the park.

"Pray turn with me, Carmichael," said Arthur. "I am going, I find, to an empty house; and it is long since we have met. It will be a charity to bestow your company upon me."

"Willingly," replied Mr. Carmichael. "It is long since I have seen you, Arthur. Tell

me in the first place your news from Italy. I have not heard from Bertram these three weeks and more.

Arthur, in reply, detailed to his friend many particulars of his brother's health and pursuits; none of which, although he spoke in a tone of enforced cheerfulness, gave Mr. Carmichael a very cheering impression. "You know, of course," he added, "that my father and mother, and my sister, spent part of June and July with William at Lausanne. He was not allowed to come farther north this year, and ordered to return to Italy before winter. I could not obtain leave of absence then, nor do I know when we shall meet. He feels this most painfully, and to me it is dreadful. I have no heart to return to Kingsconnell now. I miss him here more than anywhere. The place begins to assume such an aspect of gloom and sadness! I could fancy, Carmichael, that the Curse was working."

"Do not give way to such fancies," gravely replied Mr. Carmichael. "We may do much with our own destinies, for good or for evil. But you will not be long amongst us, I understand, Arthur, at any rate. They tell me you are appointed to the —— Embassy?"

"I am," said Arthur. "I have only come home now to say goodbye. I must make a round of the neighbourhood forthwith, for my time is limited. Tell me," he added, after a moment's pause, "something about our neighbours. How are the worthy family at Sempilltower?"

"Very well, indeed; and at present a very numerous household. Mrs. Walter Sempill is there, with her whole family; your old acquaintances, Walter and Philip; another fine little fellow, a Harrow school-boy, like his brothers; and three nice girls."

"Is she a nice person?"

"Particularly so. Quite an Englishwoman; quiet, reserved, somewhat cold at first, but that wears off on farther acquaintance, and you get to like her exceedingly. And her thoroughly lady-like manners are a great contrast to the *last* specimen——"

Mr. Carmichael stopped short, and without looking at his companion, hastened on to another topic.

"This was Walter Sempill's last year at Oxford; and he has made some figure there. He is a remarkably fine young man, and promises to keep up the credit of the good old

stock. The Laird and his uncle wish him to study for the Scottish bar, the immemorial profession of elder sons in our country ; and he means to take up his quarters in Edinburgh next winter for that purpose."

"He is considered the heir to the property, I suppose?" said Arthur.

"Presumptive heir, of course. I must not make myself too late," added Mr. Carmichael, looking at his watch ; "for I am engaged to dine there to-day."

"To-day, Carmichael? I was in hopes that you meant to take compassion on me."

"I am very sorry to say it is not in my power, for that reason. But, Arthur, why not come with me to Sempilltower? You know there is nothing that the Laird and Mrs. Sempill more delight in, than any one taking their hospitality for granted in that way. It would quite please them, I know."

"I am well aware of that," said Arthur ; "and at any other time I should have been too happy to have availed myself of their kindness. But I cannot to-day, Carmichael. I do not feel up to it. I shall be much better at home, and at rest, if I can find it. I have had very little of late."

“Indeed, you are not looking well,” said Mr. Carmichael, glancing somewhat anxiously at his friend. “You have not been ill, have you, Arthur? We never heard of it.”

“Ill? Oh no!” exclaimed Arthur, with forced gaiety. “Only leading rather a different life from yours, in these woods and shades.”

“It has had a different result too,” said Mr. Carmichael. “You have lost your old look, Arthur. If we could go back some ten years now, and return to the former relation between us;—or if the Church——”

“If I could be compelled to make you my confessor?” interrupted Arthur in the same tone as before. “Better not, Carmichael. It would be a thankless office.”

Mr. Carmichael made no reply; but as they proceeded side by side, he continued now and then to direct an earnest and anxious gaze upon the air and countenance of the young man in whom he felt so affectionate an interest. Nothing, as he acknowledged to himself, could surpass the perfection of either; and yet the longer he looked, the more convinced he felt that all was not right, not as it had once been, within. They had now reached the parterre in front of the house.

"Come on the stone-terrace, Carmichael," said Arthur. "Don't leave me yet. If you will allow me to order the dog-cart to take you home in half an hour, that will give you ample time, won't it? And it will be quite a charity, I assure you."

Mr. Carmichael assented, and Arthur, ringing the front-door bell, gave the necessary orders. They then proceeded along the terrace, upon which the westering sun was flinging an oppressive lustre; yet Mr. Carmichael observed that his companion shivered more than once. He did not speak again until they had descended the flight of steps at the extremity, and reached the lower walk; and when he did, it was to ask one or two trifling questions, the replies to which he heard with an air of absence and pre-occupation. At last by an evident effort, the interrogatory so long trembling on his lips, found utterance.

"By the way, Carmichael, you have not told me any thing of the Grange family?"

"I have not much to tell," gravely replied Mr. Carmichael, in whom the question aroused the emotions of stern indignation which the charm of Arthur's winning and cordial manner had momentarily lulled. "You are probably

aware that Miss Beatrice Lockhart was thought to be dying last winter?" He paused abruptly; for his companion became deadly pale, and staggering backward, sank upon one of the terrace seats. Mr. Carmichael stood silently by; and Arthur, after a few minutes, by a violent effort, recovered himself; but not, as his friend had hoped, to open his heart to him, or explain his own conduct.

"Tell me every thing!" was all he said, in a low hoarse voice.—"Is she——is Miss Lockhart——tell me."

"She has quite recovered her health and spirits," replied Mr. Carmichael, who felt no inclination to lead him to suppose his own power so unbounded. "But neither she nor Miss Helen is at present at the Grange."

"And in a few words, he informed Arthur of the circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted, adding that early in the spring Helen had been invited to spend some months with her Uncle and Aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart Clephane, whose eldest daughter had just been married. They had asked Helen to come and be her remaining cousin's companion, and partake, with her, of the instructions of various masters. She had, accordingly resided a con-

siderable time with them in Edinburgh, and then accompanied them to their country-residence in West-Lothian; where she was joined by Beatrice. The sisters had only returned to the Grange about three weeks since; but were just then on a visit to Miss Violet Alexander, with whom Mr. Carmichael believed they were to remain some little while.

“And now,” he added, “my time is out, I fear. Do you feel better, Arthur? Are you able to walk to the house? Take my arm.”

“Thank you,” said Arthur, rising and accepting it.

“You had better lie down and rest,” said Mr. Carmichael, as they approached the house. “I feel quite uneasy in the idea of leaving you alone all the evening.”

“You are very kind, Carmichael,” replied Arthur in a low and subdued voice; “but there really is nothing amiss with me. If only ——” he checked himself, in something he seemed about to say. “We shall meet again soon, I hope?” added he, as they came round to the front of the house. “I shall not remain long at Kingsconnell; not longer than I can help, most certainly; and then, after that,—who can tell when we may again come together?”

“ Well, Arthur, the world is all before you, and a brilliant world. And yet I am not easy about you. This is neither the place nor the time for saying all that I have in my heart to say, as your minister, as your own friend, and the friend of your brother ;—but——”

“ I think I can anticipate part of it,” said Arthur with a smile, at variance with the expression of his countenance, and the tone of his voice. “ You would say to me, and too truly, perhaps,—‘ what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ’ ”

“ And if I would say so, Arthur ?——But I see the dog-cart at the gate. Take care of yourself. Farewell for a little while.”

Mr. Carmichael drove off, and Arthur stood gazing after him for a few minutes, then listlessly turned towards the house ; where at the open door stood the housekeeper, a kind motherly person, full of welcomes to Mr. Arthur, of apologies for the empty house, and of anxiety to know what he would like to have for dinner. These matters being dispatched as hastily as was consistent with the kindly courtesy which marked the young man’s conduct towards every one with whom he came into contact, Arthur

asked to be admitted to his brother's apartments; and was preceded thither by the house-keeper in person, who poured forth as she went, her hopes that Mr. Bertram might soon return to inhabit them again.

"Poor dear young gentleman!" she exclaimed to herself, as in the act of closing the door of the Octagon room, she perceived Arthur fling himself on the sofa which was wont to be occupied by William, and hide his face in his hands. "'Tis easy to see how he feels about his brother! And indeed, this is not like the same house since Mr. Bertram left."

Little did the worthy woman suspect the tempest of feelings which at that moment swept through the breast of her young master! To one so peculiarly alive to outward impressions as Arthur, this silent, solitary return to his father's house, the result of mere accident though it were, spoke more forcibly than a thousand homilies. And every recollection, so long deadened or obscured, of past days, and past feelings, awoke as with a giant's strength amidst these familiar scenes;—his brother's voice again sounded in his ears,—his brother's pale spiritual countenance seemed again to rise before him;—*another* face was there beside

him;—a young, bright, innocent face; and he himself, as bright, as free from all the thousand stains which since that time had darkened his innocence;—and yet this was but two short years ago!—If passionate vows,—if tears which he felt no slur upon his manhood,—if heart-rending sobs of penitence could have availed to blot out the past and strengthen the wavering will for the future, that hour of agony in his brother's deserted room had seen Arthur Bertram arise a renovated being. But alas! not in man's own strength may such penitence avail, or such vows be fulfilled. One hour,—many hours,—of anguish will not undo the baleful effects of years spent in self-pleasing,—an existence passed without God in the world. Feeling, without a sense of duty, that sense derived from high religious principle alone, is “as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, which passeth away.”

CHAPTER VI.

“Dark Inexorable Might!
Grant—oh! grant me but this night!
This single night at rest to be,
Then, stern one! then, I'll cope with thee.”

THE ANCESTRESS,
From the German of F. GRILLPARZER.

MR. CARMICHAEL'S information to Arthur respecting the movements of the younger Miss Lockharts proved to be incorrect, as he was speedily made aware, by finding Helen, radiant in blushing happiness, seated in a window by Walter's side at Sempilltower, on his somewhat late arrival there. Miss Grace, who was likewise in presence, informed him that her nieces had unexpectedly returned home the previous evening, on account of Miss Violet's being obliged to repair to Glasgow on business; and that Beatrice was quite well, but had declined accompanying them that day, on plea of fatigue

after a longer walk than usual in the heat of the forenoon.

This was the truth; and yet not all the truth. Beatrice had accidentally learned that the whole family were absent from Kingsconnell; and feeling the most intense desire to revisit the walks on the other side of the river, where she had not been for upwards of a twelvemonth, she gladly availed herself of an excuse for not dining at Sempilltower; and took her way thither early in the evening. The day, as has been mentioned, had been one of oppressive heat; and the approach of evening did not bring its usual refreshing coolness. The sky was bright and unclouded overhead; but on the verge of the western horizon huge piles of clouds began to come towering up, their edges bright with all manner of gorgeous hues, but dark and heavy in the centre; slowly rising, enlarging, and spreading ominously over the deep blue above. Of these appearances, however, Beatrice saw nothing down amongst the woods. She was only conscious of the breathless stillness of the atmosphere, and of that peculiar feeling of depression which precedes a thunderstorm; but her mind occupied on other thoughts, did not dwell much upon

the subject. Like him to whom she was unconsciously so near, she was gathering up "the electric chain" of association from every object around her,—finding her old ideas where she had left them, and living over past hours too intensely to have acute perceptions of the present.

Following the windings of a walk on the opposite side of the Connell Water to the Grange, a sudden turn brought her to a point where a massive plane-tree stood out upon the bank overhanging the stream, its trunk encompassed by a circular bench. And leaning with folded arms against the trunk, and intently gazing on the opposite side of the water, she beheld a tall motionless figure, who remained in the same attitude, as if unconscious of her presence, on her nearer approach. An indefinable sensation—an instinct—gave her warning who it was. She stopped short,—nearly choked by the throbbing of her heart. He turned his head,—stood for an instant without stirring,—then advanced, and extended his hand.

"Miss Lockhart," he falteringly said, as she gave him her's, "this is very unexpected. I had no idea—I was told you were from home."

"And I," replied Beatrice, striving to steady

her trembling voice,—“that there was no one at Kingsconnell; else I should not have been here.”

“There *is* no one,” said Arthur, “but myself, and I only arrived a few hours ago. It is long—long since we have met in these woods!”

“It is,” answered Beatrice. She meant to have added something in an indifferent tone, but her voice failed her.

“I have not forgotten the last time;” pursued Arthur in a low voice.

“It is best forgotten,” Beatrice found strength to say. “Good-night, Mr. Bertram.”

“Good-night!” he exclaimed with sudden vehemence. “How? why?—We never used to part so.”

“That is all over,” said Beatrice; “and we must do so now. Good-night.” She held out her hand as she spoke; and it was caught, clasped, held fast in his. Hitherto she had not looked him in the face; but now she raised her eyes, and met his. In the gathering gloom they stood, and gazed once more upon each other. His eyes, more eloquent than speech, seemed to scan her inmost soul, as she looked on the countenance which had haunted her dreams for years, and marked its expression of

trouble, of agitation, and pain,—so changed from the bright, glad aspect of old. And Arthur, on his part, dwelt on the lineaments of her face,—the pale transparent purity, which had taken place of its mantling bloom;—the added sweetness, thought, and refinement, which characterized the eye, the lips, and the brow, and felt that she had never been so lovely as now,—never so dear to his soul as at the moment when honour alike to her and to another told him that they never ought to meet again. But its dictates were unheard in the tumultuous rush of emotions caused by the sight of Beatrice.

“Do not,—do not say good-night, Miss Lockhart!” he exclaimed, in answer to her last words. “This may be our only meeting. I am here but for a few days before going abroad. We, who were once such friends—do not let us part thus.”

Beatrice could not answer. The rebellious sob—the “*hysterica passio*” rose in her throat, and forbade speech. It was a bitter moment. But she gently withdrew her hand, and struggled for composure.

“I must go home,” she said at last. “It will soon get dark, and the bridge is a good

way off. I have walked farther than I intended."

At that moment, a flash of lightning so vivid as nearly to blind her, darted between them, almost instantaneously followed by a clap, a roar, of thunder, directly overhead as it seemed; which rolling, reverberating, — redoubling, as if it never meant to end, at last died in low muttered growls, leaving a dead hush behind it. Beatrice stood for an instant stunned and stupified; then she felt her hand again seized, and her arm drawn within Arthur's.

"Come!" he hastily said, — "come, Miss Lockhart, let me take you home! We are going to have a fearful storm."

They walked rapidly along the path for a few minutes in silence; then again there was a vivid flash, and another hideous roar; followed by another and another. The wood seemed one sheet of flame; the tumult overhead was deafening, — astounding, — awful. But through all was distinguishable the low whisper of Arthur, as still moving hastily on, he drew her more and more closely to him.

"You are not afraid? Oh! do not fear. There is no danger, I trust. I cannot feel it.

I can feel nothing but the rapture of having you thus beside me."

Beatrice could not answer. Her agitation, combined with the speed at which they walked, completely took away her breath. Another forked tongue of lightning—another louder, longer, more tremendous burst of thunder! Arthur's arm was now flung round her. She was pressed closely to his side, as in the gloom of the darkened evening they emerged upon the banks of the Connell Water. The little wooden bridge was before them—they were advancing with rapid steps to cross it, when suddenly a noise, a strange—distant, booming sound, momentarily approaching nearer, became audible above the thunder. The slight fabric of the bridge was seen to rock and quiver. Arthur paused——listened——

"There is not a moment to be lost?" he exclaimed; and suddenly, ere Beatrice could divine his meaning, he snatched her up in his arms, turned from the bridge, and sped down the bank towards the stepping stones beneath. One vigorous bound placed him on the nearest; another, and another succeeded. He was more than half-way across, when with a roar, a crash which seemed to shake the solid earth, a flashing

wall of dark brown waters came trampling down the stream, broke upon the bridge,—tore it up, and carried it along in its career of devastation. Beatrice saw for one moment the tawny crests of the waves above their heads; in the next, they would have been surrounded,—engulphed;—she felt that Arthur tottered;—but ere the full horror of their fate had time to burst upon her, one desperate effort had enabled him to reach and grasp the branch of an overhanging tree, and as the torrent swept madly over the stepping stones, he stood with her safe on land; bore her to the summit of the bank, and placing her on the ground beneath a huge silver fir, whose wide spreading branches afforded a shelter from the rain which now began to pour furiously down, he leant against the trunk, panting, breathless, and exhausted.

Dizzy and confused by the peril she had so narrowly escaped, Beatrice for a few minutes felt scarce conscious where she was; then as the full sense of her deliverance dawned upon her, a burst of tears came to the relief of her overcharged and aching heart.

“You have saved my life!” she passionately exclaimed, “how can I ever——ever——”

Struggling to repress the sobs which choked

her utterance, she looked up. Arthur's face was hidden in his hands; his whole frame trembling from uncontrollable agitation. He neither moved nor answered.

"Are you ill, Mr. Bertram?" timidly asked Beatrice. "I fear you have over-tasked your strength. Why did you do it?"

"Why?" he exclaimed, removing his hands from his face. "Why?—Because I would gladly have died for you, Beatrice! I wish I had! I wish to Heaven I had. Better death for you than life without you. Beatrice! hear me! do not turn from me! I love you—I have loved you for years! I love you with my whole heart and soul. Pity me, Beatrice, and forgive me!"

"Forgive you?" It was all Beatrice could answer. He had caught her hand; and as he drew her gently towards him, she raised her eyes to his, and that one glance told all. There, in the gloom, still broken at intervals by the glare of the lightning,—amidst the roll of thunder, the roaring of the river,—the hissing sheets of rain, which fell as if the very windows of Heaven were opened above their heads, through all the awful conflict of the elements, which was audible to her senses, one sound

alone had power to reach her soul. That sound was the voice of Arthur, the passionate ejaculations of love and tenderness, mingled with those of bitter and inexplicable self-upbraiding.

“You love me, Beatrice? dearest, best beloved? You never ceased to love me? Nor I you. Never, never. But oh! that I could blot out the past! that I could efface from my life these last two years! Do you bid me forget the past?—Little do you dream?—But I cannot—I will not!—Not to-night; not to-night. One brief hour of happiness may be permitted us!”——

It was an hour of happiness. Wild, confused, bewildering, scarce admitting of connected thought or speech,—still less of doubts or explanations, and desiring none; that species of happiness to which its own self-consciousness is amply sufficient. As Beatrice stood by Arthur's side, his arm encircling her; his hand clasping hers; where within her heart could doubt or fear have found a place? It was full to overflowing of bliss, too intense for speech,—intense in proportion to the long period of hopelessness which had preceded it. The darkening wood, the muttering of the storm as it began to pass away,—the rushing rain, whose

heavy drops were now penetrating their place of shelter through its thickly interwoven boughs, —all were unmarked—unfelt. It was heaven to be there together; only too quickly at an end; for Beatrice felt that to linger there after it was practicable to reach home, was not to be thought of. The fury of the storm was now over;—the rain, though still falling, no longer came down in the floods it had done; and they quitted the vicinity of the friendly tree; pursued arm in arm, the intricacies of the woodland paths, which there was now scarce light enough to enable them to discover; and found themselves at last, at the little garden-gate opening upon the espalier walk, and thence proceeded round by the terrace to the front of the house.

“Here we must part,” said Beatrice. “And you have so far to go? You must return by the road. And how wet you are, Arthur!” she anxiously added. “I had no idea you were so completely wet!”

“Am I wet? I did not feel it,”—said Arthur. “What does it matter? And must we part? But not for long. We shall meet again. I will not detain you now; for you too are wet, my own Beatrice. But to morrow we

shall meet again. My Beatrice! my beloved! Good-night."

"Good-night! God bless you, Arthur." He clasped her in his arms; imprinted a long kiss upon her lips, then turned away, as she sprang up the door-steps; and the door was at the same moment opened.

"Eh Sirs! Gude be thankit! Here's Miss Beetress safe at last."

"Lordsake! Miss Beetress, my lamb, whar' fand ye a bield?"

"A pretty fright you have given us, Beatrice!"

"Glaiket thing! gaun daikerin' oot, and a storm like that brewin'! But are ye wat, bairn? Come into the fire—come!"

Such were the exclamations of two old maid-servants, Miss Willie and Mrs. Lockhart, who were all assembled in the lobby. The household had been thrown into considerable alarm, on the sudden breaking of the storm, by the recollection that Beatrice was out, and exposed to it; while the absence of Lowry Mac Fyke with the party at Sempilltower, the impossibility of procuring any other man to go to her assistance, and the nervous terrors of the females during the continuance of the

thunder, left them no resource but to await its termination in fear and trembling. At the moment of Beatrice's arrival, old Kirstie and the other damsel by her side, were about to issue forth with a lantern and cloaks, to institute a search for her in the woods; and great was their delight at finding this unnecessary. Beatrice was hurried into the parlour, where a fire of unwonted size had been lighted,—compelled, *nolens volens*, to swallow some warm wine and water, then dismissed to change her wet clothes,—still feeling as if she were walking and speaking in some happy dream; whilst on her return to the parlour, her grandmother, with a degree of anxiety unusual with her, “wished the lassie nicht na’ be the waur o’ this bonny ploy; for she had never seen her wi’ sic’ a colour in her cheeks, and licht in her ee’!”

Vain were it to attempt describing the rapture of Helen, when on the sisters retiring to their room that night, she was informed by Beatrice of the scene which had taken place on the banks of the Connell Water. She was moved to tears by the narrative of the fearful peril from which the bravery and presence of mind of Arthur had snatched her sister; for to

the fury of the *spate* in the river, probably caused by the breaking of a water-spout amongst the hills, she could bear ample testimony; the torrent having burst with a stunning roar down the deep glen below the house of Sem-pilltower, and being conjectured to have done much mischief on its more level banks. But that an incident so fearful should have led to results so blessed,—how could Helen ever feel sufficiently thankful? Her innocent and inexperienced heart, like her sister's, admitted not the possibility of farther doubt or uneasiness. Arthur Bertram loved Beatrice. He had told her so. What more could be desired? No question but that there must be much opposition,—long delay,—many trials—but could not all these be borne with such an assurance?

“Borne! oh Helen!” was Beatrice's fervent exclamation. “Any thing can be borne now. I feel as if I should never know sorrow or anxiety again. I could almost be tempted to say, ‘Fate! do thy worst.’”

Often did Beatrice recall these words. But one thing in this world of chance and change the utmost extremity of trial cannot take away,—the indelible memory of happiness which has been. The past is all our own. And never,

throughout the trials of her after life, could she look back to that one night of exquisite, unmingled happiness, without a thrill which faintly reflected still its departed bliss. Throughout its long sleepless hours,—for great joy is as sleepless as great sorrow, her bodily senses lay steeped in a trance of profoundest tranquillity, whilst to the widely-awakened perceptions of her soul, the whole scene of the previous evening was present with the vividness of reality. Again, in Arthur's arms, pressed against his heart, she was borne in safety across that raging flood;—again, while the rain fell and the thunder belowed, she stood beneath that sheltering tree,—she felt his hand clasping hers; his arm entwining itself around her; his lips pressing her cheek, his passionate words breathing in her ear; again, her arm in his, she trod the woodland paths; again parted from him at the door in that long embrace; and parted with an assurance that they should speedily meet again. And as the glories of the cloudless morning met her eyes on rising, when opening the window of her room, which looked into the garden, she inhaled the delicious freshness of the air, purified by the storm, an idea more bright and beautiful even than the morning,

the thought that she should see Arthur in the course of that day, lent added brightness to all.

The morning hours passed on, in a pleasant dream of hope and joy. Beatrice was sitting in the old school-room, in her old seat by the window,—a book in her hand, her eyes ever and anon wandering to the espalier walk, or calmly bent on vacancy,—her heart full of sweet visions. Helen, having just concluded a long and diligent practice of some of Walter Sempill's favorite songs, had put on her garden bonnet, and gone to collect flowers, wherewith to replenish the beaupots in their little sanctuary. While wandering, intent on this purpose, in the garden paths near the front of the house, her ear caught the sound of a horse, trotting quickly up the avenue; and having some lurking expectation of a visitor from Sempilltower that day, she proceeded to the parlour by the front door; beside which, fastened by the iron ring affixed there for the purpose, the horse she had heard was standing. Entering the parlour, Helen found Dr. Chisholm seated in the midst of the ladies, to whom he appeared to be giving some highly interesting detail.

“Dear me! dear me!” Miss Grace was exclaiming, as her niece entered. “We never heard that Mr. Arthur was come home even. You are not seriously alarmed, are you, Doctor?”

“What has happened?” asked Helen, as she shook hands with Dr. Chisholm, her heart sinking at once with an unaccountable apprehension. His answer too truly verified her fears. He had been sent for at an early hour that morning, by the house-keeper at Kingsconnell, to see her young master; whom, on his arrival, he had found in a high fever, attended by inflammatory symptoms of a serious nature; and he had only just then quitted the house,—having dispatched an express to Mordington to hasten the return of Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram. Whether he himself was alarmed or not, Dr. Chisholm was too prudent to say. He hoped Mr. Arthur would get round, with care. He was constitutionally subject to fever, whenever any thing was the matter with him; but certainly he——Dr. Chisholm—had never seen him so ill before,—and no wonder indeed! he had nobody but himself to thank for it. This of course elicited enquiries,—while Helen’s breath came thick

and fast with alarm; but the answer re-assured her. Mr. Arthur had really been guilty of the maddest imprudence. He had been out in the storm the previous night; so at least his servant conjectured; for as he had chosen his brother's sitting-room for the evening, no one could tell when he went out or came in. His servant had taken candles into the room about dusk, but as a book was lying open on the table, and the door into Mr. Bertram's dressing-room was ajar, it was his impression that his master had gone in there; and during the storm, as he did not ring his bell, no one liked to intrude upon him. The old housekeeper would have gone in, she said, had she been about, but she had taken to her bed, terrified by the lightning; and one of the maids had gone into fits,—so that the house was in an uproar. At last, about ten o'clock at night, Mr. Arthur had rung his bell; and appeared, when his servant went in, as if he must have been some time in the room. He had retired to his bed, saying that he did not feel well, and it was only then that the man discovered, to his horror, that his clothes were saturated with wet! of course this quite accounted for his illness. Of course it did, the family conclave

unanimously agreed ; and Dr. Chisholm, having delivered himself of his tidings, arose to go, observing that he must be at Kingsconnell again in the afternoon ; whilst Helen, feeling as if she had been ordered up for execution, prepared to go and carry to her sister a piece of news which must dash her new-born happiness with the bitterness of anxiety and suspense.

And thus did a day, begun under auspices so different, close in sorrow and in tears.

“ Not seldom, clad in azure vest
Deceitfully goes forth the morn.”

CHAPTER VII.

“Wo to thee, my poor Zorayda!
By the Fountain’s side,—
Better than this weary watching
Better thou hadst died!

L. E. L.

“To him who loves * *
Such moments clasp the grief of years.”

BYRON.

“SIR THOMAS, may I say a word to you, before I go?”

Thus spoke Mr. Carmichael, who had just knocked at the door of Sir Thomas Bertram’s private sitting-room, about an hour after the arrival of the party. Mr. Carmichael had hastened to Kingsconnell on the first report of Arthur’s illness, and had never quitted his side until his parents came. He was now preparing to return home.

"Certainly, Carmichael. Pray sit down. You are not going to leave us, I hope?" Sir Thomas spoke with the painfully-evident effort of one resolved, against his better judgment, not to be alarmed.

"Thank you, I must," replied the clergyman, "but I shall return early to-morrow. I am indeed most anxious about Arthur."

"I trust you will find him much better to-morrow. Indeed I would fain think him a little better now, if I may judge from the accounts of his state in the morning."

"He is calmer, certainly, at present," said Mr. Carmichael; "but his mind still wanders; and—to own the truth, Sir Thomas,—it was on that head I wished to speak to you. I do not like to intrude on Lady Bertram just now; but if I might venture an opinion——"

"My dear Carmichael, you know well how much value we all attach to your opinions. Pray go on."

"Well then, Sir Thomas, I feel emboldened to say that I think it would be better,—more prudent,—that Lady Bertram should herself remain as much as possible beside Arthur;—that;—in short—none but those who can be thoroughly depended on should be admitted to

his room. Many things find utterance in the delirium of fever, which the sufferer would have died rather than have had known. I have been an unwilling auditor to-day to a great deal which it would not be desirable should go farther, and I thought it only right to warn you of this."

The warning was acted on, and the mother herself took her post by the sick bed of her unconscious son; whose fever and delirium ran very high during that and the following day and night. Well indeed might Mr. Carmichael have spoken as he did; for even the worldly and ambitious heart of Lady Bertram sank within her at the revelation of folly, recklessness, and sin—the dark price at which this child of her hopes had purchased temporary forgetfulness of the happiness she had led him to forfeit. But what to a mind like her's, were these unveilings of the inner man, to the consternation with which she listened to all that he poured forth on another subject, and discovered that after all her precautions, after all her well laid schemes, the very event which she had flattered herself was now for ever warded off, had actually taken place? Little by little, her acute perception enabled her from

the broken fragments of Arthur's wild discourse, to make out the whole history of his accidental rencontre with Beatrice, and its consequences. All his passionate love, his bitter remorse,—every inmost thought and feeling which he would most truly “have died rather than have had known,”—to his mother above all,—were by his own voice laid bare before her. The name of Mary Adair too was repeatedly mingled with that of Beatrice; but over all, whatever it might be, relating to the former, there hung a dimness, an obscurity, which Lady Bertram could not penetrate. She had learnt enough, more than enough.

A few days' acute alarm and anxiety brought the young man's illness at length to a favorable crisis; and with the wonderful self-repairing power of a youthful constitution, he soon began rapidly to recover. As yet, perhaps, too weak for much or long-continued thought, he seemed reposing in a state of tranquil dreaminess, from which his mother carefully forbore rousing him. Warped as her right and womanly feelings were by ambition and worldliness, Lady Bertram's affection for Arthur was intense; and she shrank from inflicting upon him, until more equal to enduring it, the pain which no com-

punctious visitings prompted her to contemplate sparing him in the end. Emily too, warmly attached to her brother, and her heart touched and softened by his illness, and his present state of languid weakness, devoted herself to him in every possible way; and thus a few days glided on, scarce marked in their progress, save by his gradual increase of strength.

It was a beautiful afternoon; and Arthur, who had that day been out for the first time, a short drive, and was a good deal fatigued in consequence, lay asleep on the couch in his dressing-room, whilst Lady Bertram, seated in a chair by the window, pursued her netting, and silently watched him. At this moment, the letters, which arrived in the afternoon at Kingsconnell, were brought her by her maid; and amongst her own, she perceived one addressed to Arthur, in a female hand, with which it seemed to her that she was not unfamiliar. Some little time after this, her son awoke, and observing that his mother was engaged in reading her letters, rose from the couch, and enquired if there were any for him. Lady Bertram handed this one to him; and, her eyes the while apparently fixed upon her

own, remarked that at sight of the seal and superscription he became deadly pale. For a minute he stood holding it, as if unable to summon courage to do more; then with trembling fingers he opened, and read it,—passed his hand over his forehead with a confused and bewildered gesture, and sinking on the sofa whence he had arisen, fell back and fainted.

It was long ere he revived sufficiently to miss the letter, which his mother had taken from his relaxing grasp, and placed on the table beside him. He again attempted to read it, but the characters swam before his dizzied sight, and he closed his eyes with a shudder, and lay perfectly silent and motionless. His mother did not break the silence. She sat quietly by, only at intervals applying Eau de Cologne to his forehead; then perceiving that the faintness had gone off, she kissed and left him, as she said, to lie quiet and rest awhile; and took her way to her husband's sitting-room.

For the first time in her life, Lady Bertram had violated the laws of honour; and, actuated by what she considered a motive sufficiently imperative to justify her conduct, had been

guilty of reading what was not intended to meet her eye. Before her son recovered himself so far as to be conscious of what was passing beside him, she had made herself mistress of the contents of the fatal letter,—a few lines only—subscribed with the name of ————Mary Adair. They were written under the distress and excitement of hearing that Arthur had been alarmingly ill, and expressed a passionate intensity of feeling, such as Lady Bertram had not suspected to lie dormant in the nature of the worshipped beauty. She could not, the writer said, after what had passed between them, feel that she was violating propriety in thus addressing her beloved Arthur; but even if she were,—it mattered not; she must give vent to the emotions which in her parents' presence, she was not, as yet, at liberty to express; she must assure him of her sorrow, her sympathy, her longing desire to be with him in the hours of suffering and languor. Of her affection, her constancy, she felt that he could require no assurance; and the knowledge which time must ere long bring to her parents, of the impossibility of altering her sentiments, would, she doubted not, render them, indulgent as they were, propitious to

her's and Arthur's hopes: The certainty of this enabled her to support the tedious time of separation with patience; but could not sustain her under the trial of hearing at second hand of his illness, and knowing nothing farther. They must not incur the risk of a correspondence just at present, but once only he must write to her, as soon as his strength permitted, and tell her how he was. She could not rest without an assurance of his convalescence from his own hand.

Rigid as were Lady Bertram's notions of female delicacy,—it was not in reference to these that this letter struck her on perusal. Her predominant feeling was one of utter consternation at the inexplicable maze in which her son appeared to have entangled himself, mingled with indignant displeasure at the weakness with which he must have yielded the sway to his passions, and with alarm at the idea that by his own mad act he might too probably have forfeited his chance of forming a connexion which in every way would have satisfied even her ambition for him. Like Mary herself, Lady Bertram entertained no doubt of the ultimate consent of Lord and Lady Mountjoye, to a match involving the

happiness of their idolized daughter, and that too with one who at no distant date would too probably be the heir to a splendid property. But how would they stand affected towards Arthur, should they discover the insult which he had put upon their daughter,—the incredible deficiency in truth and honour which he had shown? Her brain reeled under the burden of conflicting and troubled thoughts; and scarcely ever had her fortitude been more severely tried than by her successful effort to retain an aspect of perfect composure, between the reading of the letter and the moment when she quitted her son's room. It was a relief to find Sir Thomas in his apartment, and alone, and to unfold to his shocked and astonished ear her narrative of error, confusion, and dismay.

Some days of outward calm elapsed. No allusion to her son's sudden indisposition, or its cause, had ever passed Lady Bertram's lips. Her tender care of him continued undiminished; but she resolved to force no confidence, nor appear to be aware of the necessity for any, until his health should be sufficiently re-established to avert all risk to a nervous system so excitable as his. The time at length arrived

when such precautions ceased to be called for ; and when both his parents felt themselves at liberty to speak openly.

But into the details of this painful period it is not necessary to enter. The inflexible determination of the ambitious father,—the more skilful, more prevailing, representations of the calm, impassive, worldly-minded mother,—and their effects, may be left to the reader's own imagination. Arthur Bertram had not now the strength of conscious integrity to support him. His own hands had barbed the darts directed against his own heart. Self-convicted from his own lips of basely trifling with two women at the same time,—forced to confess that the faith which he had offered to Beatrice Lockhart had already been pledged to Mary Adair, or at least that he had given the latter so much reason to consider it so, as must prevent him, in honor, from drawing back, what could he urge in his own defence, which could avail against facts like these ? And when to all this was added the equally incontrovertible fact, that in addressing Beatrice at all he had broken a solemn pledge to the contrary, which however cruelly and wickedly exacted, was not the less binding when given ;

and the farther circumstance of his re-iterated acts of folly and extravagance having again overwhelmed him beneath a burden of pecuniary obligations, which his father would only consent to liquidate on terms dictated by himself, more need not be said to pourtray the full extent of the difficulties in which he stood involved. It was indeed a melancholy position! Young, accomplished, richly-endowed alike by nature and by fortune, with all that warmth of heart and generosity of disposition which lend additional lustre to the highest gifts,—with all that charm of manner which wins so many hearts that mere beauty could not touch,—full of good impulses and noble feelings,—Arthur Bertram was but one more of the many instances which this world affords, of the total inefficiency of all these, uncemented by firm principle,—one more illustration of the truth that the actually wicked do less mischief, and cause less misery to themselves and others, than the too-often fascinating and irresistible slaves of impulse. And if he, at the same time, afforded an example to all mothers of the evil results of tampering with natures like his, that did not diminish the amount of his own personal responsibility. But the penalty

he was now paying for his sins was no light one. Ere yet the conscience has become hardened by persistence in evil, there are none who suffer more acutely than those whose passions have been permitted to overpower, but have proved unable to stifle, the voices of their better and higher natures. The unhappy young man felt, in its utmost extent, the baseness of his own conduct towards Beatrice; and in the darkness of night, in the solitude of his own chamber,—or more frequently in the deserted apartment of his brother, the paroxysms of his despair and self-reproach, so proudly and determinedly stifled whilst any eye could witness them, were indeed dreadful. All the more dreadful were they, that they brought no calm, no healing, when their violence was over. It was not the blessed dew of repentance, but the scorching lava of remorse which overflowed his soul; not to pass away, leaving a fertilized soil behind it, but to indurate and encrust, and bury the most precious gifts beneath its surface.

Day after day, though too bitterly conscious that all hope was over, did Arthur linger on at Kingsconnell; from absolute inability to disclose the truth to her whom he almost felt

as if he never had loved till now, when his own act and deed had for ever sealed their separation. He was aware how strange, how slighting, and how unaccountable, his conduct in never seeing or writing to her must appear to Beatrice; and yet he could neither summon courage to seek her, nor endure the idea of departing without an interview. *She* had made no effort to remind him of her existence. And Arthur turned from the passionate letter of the beautiful and worshipped being who had too unreservedly laid bare her heart before him, to contrast her self-abandonment with the retiring delicacy of the object of his first and purest love. He felt as man never fails to feel when woman is tempted to over-step, though but by a hand's breadth, the limits of that reserve which is her most powerful source of influence; and with such feelings at his heart, now that the spell of Mary's presence was no longer upon him, even whilst replying to her, as he behoved to do, in a strain as far as might be responsive to the tone of her letter, he experienced, hour by hour, with added intensity of anguish, the full extent of his own infatuation,—the magnitude of the punishment which he had brought upon his own head.

But this state of things could not last. Arthur's official engagements, already long deferred by his illness, brooked no farther delay, nor would his father hear of any. He found himself compelled to fix a day for his departure ; and now the crisis was come ; and he must either nerve himself to an explanation with Beatrice, or endure the disgrace of leaving the country, after what had passed between them, without attempting one. Distracted by contending feelings, shrinking in horror from the task before him, yet filled with a passionate longing to behold her once more, he permitted one after another of the last numbered days to escape without any effort more determinate than consisted in wandering, like a restless ghost, through the fated woodland paths by the Connell Water, in the hope—a vain one as it proved—of chance affording him the meeting which he absolutely lacked courage to seek. Beatrice did not appear in these her favourite haunts ; and yet her heart was there, wherever her bodily presence might be. No day elapsed that she would not have given worlds to repair to the lime-tree seat, and revisit the tree which had sheltered her and Arthur on that never-to-be-forgotten night, which she now began too

truly to regard as the cradle and the grave of her happiness. But her sensitive heart shrank from the idea of appearing to fling herself in Arthur's way; for even its unbounded faith and trust could no longer blind her to the perception of his marked neglect and avoidance. It was long since the first torturing anxiety on his account had been at an end; those days of misery, through which she felt as if she could scarce have lived, but for the gentle, unobtrusive delicacy of feeling with which Mr. Carmichael contrived that she should receive daily intelligence of his state, without appearing to suppose that she was more particularly interested in it than any one else. These were succeeded by the period when, aware of his convalescence, she calmly and hopefully awaited the time when he should be sufficiently recovered to visit her once more. Beyond one or two meetings previous to his inevitable departure, she did not look. Secure in the blessed assurance of his affection, all other trials connected with him seemed light. But when, long after he was known to have in a great measure resumed his usual habits, day after day still passed without a sign of his desire to renew their intercourse, Beatrice began to

experience a return of that bitter, corroding pain which the previous year's woful experience had rendered too familiar to her, but more acute in proportion to its contrast with the late gleam of happiness. She spoke of him less and less to Helen, the only creature to whom she had confided the secret of their last meeting; only, although she could not endure the appearance of seeking him, she contrived on various pretexts, with her sister's tacit help, to avoid leaving home, in the daily-frustrated hope that he might seek her. And thus it was one forenoon, when Helen, laying aside her drawing, mentioned her having promised to go to luncheon at Sempilltower, for the purpose of taking a long walk with the young people afterwards.

"Hadn't you better come too, Beatrice, darling?" she asked.

Beatrice sadly shook her head. "No, Helen, dear, I would rather not. But don't say anything of my being in the house. I can't bear to go out."

"There will be no one to say anything to," replied Helen. "Didn't you hear grandmamma settling at breakfast that she and my aunts were all to go in to St. Michael's for a regular

day's shopping? And Aunt Grace demurring about our not going too till, I reminded her of this engagement to Sempilltower? I think they are all off."

"I did not hear it," said Beatrice. "I must have been in a dream."

"It is such a sweet grey day," pursued Helen, walking to the window. "So delicious for walking! and to think of your sitting here all alone!"

"But I would rather, dearest," said Beatrice. "It is foolish; but don't you know—I could not be easy if——"

"I know, I know. What *can* it all mean, Beatrice? And I heard Lowry telling grand-mamma, when she had sent for him to give orders about the carriage, that he had seen *him* to-day (this morning) galloping past the avenue gate."

"Seen him! Seen Arthur! Did he?" eagerly exclaimed Beatrice, her pale face flushing all over.

"Yes; and looking, he said, by the glimpse he had of him, so pale,—so altered; he never saw any one so changed! But you see, darling, if he rode out in that direction, he is not likely to be here to-day."

"I do not expect it. Helen I have ceased to expect it, and yet I cannot bear to go out. It will soon be over now. He will soon be gone,—and then——"

"I wish he were!" exclaimed Helen to herself, as she went sadly up stairs. "I wish he had never come! And why is Beatrice so miserable? Beatrice, so good, so patient, so much better and cleverer than I am? And I so happy! And I hate myself for being so without her! But when I see Walter, I cannot help feeling happy."

Helen pursued her way to Sempilltower through the woods, and across the rustic bridge, of firmer construction, which had replaced the slighter fabric of the old one. Just as she reached the back-entrance to Kingsconnell, which it was necessary to cross in order to get out upon the high road, the clatter of hoofs struck her ear; and a horseman at the same moment riding in at the gate, came rapidly towards her; then checked his horse with so much vehemence, that the animal reared, and almost fell backward.

Helen drew back alarmed, and wished herself anywhere else when she recognised Arthur

Bertram ; who, at the same moment, with all the ease of practised horsemanship, restrained the curvets of his steed, and springing to the ground, advanced towards her. It was long since Helen had seen him ; but the alteration in his countenance did not fail to strike her forcibly ; and in spite of her indignation at his recent conduct, her gentle, womanly heart was touched by the outward tokens of suffering, and of remaining weakness, so legibly to be traced in his every look and movement.

“I hope you are quite recovered?” she said, when their first silent greeting had been exchanged. Arthur replied in the affirmative ; and one or two indifferent questions and answers passed between them ; apparently indifferent at least, but covering a degree of awkwardness so painful, that Helen would have given much to end it. But he stood directly in her path, and she had not courage to extricate herself. At last she mustered resolution enough to say, “I must wish you good morning, Mr. Bertram. I am rather late for an engagement at Sempilltower.”

“One moment,” said Arthur, taking the hand she held out to him, but detaining it.

"Your sister? Is she at home?" The faltering of his voice, and trembling of his hand, moved Helen in her own despite.

"My sister is at home," she replied, "and quite alone." She made another movement to go; but Arthur continued to detain her.

"Farewell!" he said at last, with an effort. "We were once friends, and it is a long parting to be made so coldly."

"That," replied Helen, with spirit, "is no fault of mine, Mr. Bertram."

"Heaven knows it is not!" he vehemently answered. "Let the punishment fall where it is so amply merited! But when you think of me hereafter, Helen, let it be with compassion amidst all your blame. If I have deeply offended, I have more deeply suffered. Farewell? This is my last day at Kingsconnell! God bless you, Helen!"

He pressed her hand with fervour to his lips,—turned, mounted his horse, and galloped with furious speed up the avenue, as one who would fly from himself. Helen stood, bewildered, gazing after him for the few minutes that he was visible, then burst into a flood of tears; and as she mournfully pursued her way

to Sempilltower, again and again did she ask herself the question of a short while before,—“What does it all mean?” In vain! She could not solve the mystery. She only felt that woe and misery were impending over her sister, who had already suffered so much; and that with such an anticipation, even the sight of Walter must fail that day to render her affectionate heart happy.

It was about an hour after this time, that Beatrice was sitting in the school-room, her back to the window, which was wide open, an unfinished letter to her Aunt Helen lying before her on the table,—but the pen held idly in her fingers,—her thoughts far away. Suddenly a slight movement, a shadow darkening her paper, caused her to turn round; and standing within the window, she beheld Arthur Bertram.

She started to her feet,—her blood seeming in one moment to rush in torrents to her head,—the next to ebb back with a deadly sinking sensation to the heart,—leaving her face and lips as white as marble. And scarcely less deathly white were his. He looked more like a spectre than a living man. Thus they

stood, in silence, for some little space, gazing upon each other ;—then Arthur slowly,—falteringly—advanced ——

“ Beatrice !” It was all he uttered, in a low, faint, hollow voice.

“ Arthur !” ——

She had intended to receive him coldly,—to testify some sense of the slight he had put upon her ;—but the expression of his countenance, so full of anguish,—of desperation,—the tone of his voice,—scattered her resolution in an instant ; and ere she could recollect it, she was clasped in his arms. It was a long, passionate embrace,—from which at last releasing her, Arthur sank upon the little sofa, his old familiar seat, and hid his face in his hands.

At no after-period could he recollect with any distinctness the wild and broken conversation which ensued. He only felt that any recurrence to it, even in idea, excited him almost to madness. The gradual breaking of the miserable truth upon her innocent, single-hearted, confiding spirit—was torture to recall. To meet her assurances that she could never forget him, through the most protracted absence, with the reply that she must ;—that

they must both —— no ! he never could,—but for her own sake, she must forget him,—forget that such a wretch had ever crossed her path ; that it must be so—that there was no future to look to,—— such was his task,—and he discharged it, but *how* he could not clearly remember.

Beatrice sat in silence—— in utter stillness,—like one under the crushing weight of some hideous nightmare, whilst those words, whose import she could not clearly realize at first, gradually made their way to her comprehension. “ You tell me this ? ” she at length articulated. “ You tell me —— ”

“ I do ! ” frantically exclaimed Arthur,— “ I do. I ask you to hate—to spurn me ! I am a wretch—a doubly-perjured wretch Fettered as I knew I was, I dared to insult you with professions of attachment ; I dared to say that which I knew I could not follow out. I dared —— there are no words to express my guilt ! ”

The most enduring spirit will rise when outraged beyond a certain point. “ You should have thought of this sooner ; ” said Beatrice, calmly quitting her seat beside him. “ You have not acted fairly. But it is not yet too

late to repair the mischief. No one but my sister is aware,—no one else knows what has passed. I can only beg of you to forget the unguarded confession you have wrung from me. And now—the sooner we,—the sooner we—part—the better.” She concluded the sentence with the utmost difficulty, but without giving way to tears.

Arthur too stood up,—stood before her. “I know we must part,” he said. “I came here for that purpose. But I cannot, Beatrice! I will not—part from you thus. Not in anger! I asked you to hate me,—I know how like a villain I have acted. I would only remind you that this last act of madness was the effect of a moment of intense and overmastering excitement. Up to that moment I had suppressed all that I knew I had no right to utter. But I will not shelter myself under even that plea. Beatrice, in this miserable hour, this last—last meeting,—will you let me leave you unforgiven?”

He took her unresisting hand. Her tears were flowing profusely. Her head sank upon his shoulder; and completely overpowered by the agony of his feelings, his sobs mingled with her's,

No emotion, save one, could subsist in their last embrace. It was speechless—wordless—but words could never express all which that clinging, straining clasp conveyed. At length, in broken accents, the voice of Arthur articulated—farewell !

“ Farewell, dearest, best-beloved ! I who have been your evil genius, must see your sweet face no more. Farewell, Beatrice ! and with you,—farewell all that is good and pure. All is lost with you.”

“ Arthur ! Arthur !” Beatrice with difficulty ejaculated ; “ do not say so—if you would not make me more wretched than I am. You have better things to live for.”

He did not answer. He could not speak. One more long last kiss was pressed upon her lips ; then he gently placed her on the sofa,—cast one look around the apartment where he had passed so many happy hours, and was gone ! Beatrice sprang from her seat, for the last time watched him descending the espalier walk, then sinking on her knees, hid her face in her arms, and remained silent, motionless, and tearless.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ When mirth is full and free,
Some sudden gloom shall be ;
When haughty power mounts high,
The watcher’s axe is nigh :
All growth has bound, when greatest found,
It hastes to die.

And when thine eye surveys,
With fond adoring gaze,
And yearning heart, thy friend,—
Love to its grave doth tend.
All gifts below, save Truth, but grow
Towards an end.”

LYRA APOSTOLICA.

THE short December day had closed in, and Lady Bertram and her daughter, who had not long returned from paying some visits in the neighbourhood, sat over the fire in the boudoir of the former, enjoying the *dolce far niente* of the winter hour preceding dressing-time. The post having come in about an hour before, various letters lay upon the table beside them, and Emily had just finished the perusal of one.

“So they are actually going on to —— for the rest of the winter?” said Lady Bertram.

“So Mary says,” replied Emily. “They must be gone by this time. Lady Mountjoye has derived so much benefit from Dr. H—.’s prescriptions, that she thinks it unnecessary to remain longer at Paris, of which they appear to be very weary.”

“Weary of Paris!”

“It sounds incredible, I confess. Dear Paris! I wish I had Mary’s share of it. Mamma, we must coax papa to let us have another winter there, next year. But Mary’s letter is full of complaints. Every thing dull; the Court over-run by Jesuits; the Faubourg Saint Germain modelled on the same pattern—the—oh! no end of fault-finding. And Lord Mountjoye having been Secretary of Legation at —— for so long a time, as a young man, he enjoys the idea of revisiting his old friends there, she says. Neither Lady Mountjoye nor Mary ever was there; but they are so intimate with Lord and Lady ——, and it is a gay Court, we all know; so it will be a pleasant variety. Arthur will be charmed to see them.”

Lady Bertram, although time and increasing similarity of disposition on Emily’s part to

her mother, had rendered them much more confidential with each other than had been the case in the beginning of her daughter's career, had sedulously guarded from her knowledge the secret of Arthur's entanglement with Mary Adair, not less from a sense of honour towards the latter, than from a feeling of how much restraint the possession of a secret of the kind would create, in Emily's responses to a correspondence at present so regular and apparently unreserved on Mary's part; and it may well be supposed that from Arthur she was not likely to learn the truth. It was, therefore, in total unconsciousness of anything beyond the flirtation which was obvious to every one, between him and her friend, that Emily kept up an interchange of letters with her, much more frequent than of old. The motive of their greater frequency was perfectly evident to Lady Bertram; as also were the secret springs which had directed this move to——on the part of Lord and Lady Mountjoye; and in the skill with which it had been managed, she read a favourable augury for the success of those hopes which lurked behind the plan. Of the revival of Mary's influence over her son's impressionable heart, as soon as they should be

brought into contact once more, she could not entertain a moment's doubt; and as she thought of this beautiful, worshipped creature,—this high-born heiress, at whose feet the noblest in the land might have exulted to lay their coronets, having bestowed her heart upon him, and being occupied with schemes, having for their sole object a re-union with him,—as she pictured to herself their probable success,—and the triumph to her maternal ambition involved in it, her heart swelled with exulting pride; and she felt as if all her anxieties on Arthur's account were in course of meeting with their recompense.

Emily, whilst these thoughts were passing through her mother's mind, was occupied in reading another letter.

“This is from Ada Vincent, mamma. They are not above a few weeks returned from Naples; a dreary season, as she says, to come back to fogs and smoke; but the death of Lord Vincent's brother, whose executor he is, brought them home. However, she tells me that they saw a good deal of William at Naples, and thought him better, decidedly, and in better spirits.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Lady Bertram. “One

is always so glad to hear a report of him from some one else besides himself."

"Yes, and she mentions his finding such a resource in the society of that English clergyman whom he spoke of in his last letter, who is there on account of his health,—at Castel-a-Mare, I mean ;—Mr. Travers."

Lady Bertram sighed deeply, and with a slight expression of impatience. "Those fatal Sidneys!" she exclaimed. "That is the tie between them."

"Mr. Travers having been a friend of Mr. Sidney's? Yes, I know. But poor dear William! one does feel so glad that he should meet with a kind friend at this distance from us all; and as he prefers clergymen to any other associates, one can but rejoice that he has his wishes gratified."

"Who would have thought it, a few years ago?" ejaculated Lady Bertram; and again she sighed deeply. "What a career was open to William, with his talents, his personal advantages, even the uninterrupted health that enabled him to do so much more than many other young men! It has indeed been a most bitter disappointment."

"Arthur's career will make amends for all,

dear mamma," said Emily hopefully. "His letters are really cheering now. He seems quite regaining his buoyant spirits; and the sight of Mary Adair will do more for him than any other remedy that could have been devised. I wonder now, whether in the course of events, *that* will ever come to pass? She is the only one of all my friends, mamma, to whom I could bear to give up my darling Arthur. I feel grieved for Beatrice Lockhart, too, mamma," she added after a pause. "They were two dear girls; and there is such a blank here now that we never meet."

"I wish you never had met, Emily," replied her mother. "It has been a painful business, and one of the many warnings which are always occurring, of the danger of unequal intimacies. Do not suppose that I have regretted it less than yourself. I liked the Miss Lockharts much; and no one can feel called upon to perform so distressing a duty as that of causing disappointment, even of unwarranted hopes, to a young creature, without much pain. I should indeed be glad to hear of Miss Lockhart marrying well, elsewhere, for her's and all our sakes. Did Mrs. Sempill tell you to-day that her sister and she were going to Edinburgh?"

“No, only to Miss Alexander’s, at St. Michael’s, to remain some time. Mrs. Sempill said she had begged them not to go till after Christmas; Captain Sempill would be delighted to drive them over to church on Christmas-Day; but she really could not do without her young neighbours, as she expected her grandson, Walter, then, from Edinburgh. I know what you are thinking of, mamma; but it is Helen, not Beatrice, whom he admires; and I really do think that will be a match. Mr. and Mrs. Sempill seem quite to encourage it.”

“I should be very glad to think so,” said Lady Bertram.

“But all this time,” resumed Emily, “we are forgetting Ada’s letter. Lady Vincent and she had been at Sarsfield a few days in the beginning of last week, just when Hugh arrived there; and they are so delighted with him; I must read you what she says:—

‘Really, dear Emily, Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram ought to take out a patent for the manufacture of sons! Here is a third irresistible Mr. Bertram about to be launched on society; with the additional attraction of a hussar’s uniform, I understand. I do not mean to say that your third brother has the

same unapproachable amount of personal beauty as your second; or even that he equals your elder brother in that charm of appearance and manner which is something more than beauty; and which, though altered in character, is, I should say, even augmented now. But there is something so frank, so joyous, so young in his aspect,—he is so graceful,—so thoroughly a gentleman, and has such an unfailing flow of gay, not boisterous, spirits,—like a creature who has never known an hour's care,—that he carries all hearts by storm. Our only regret was in thinking that he must ever grow older, or ever encounter any of this world's troubles. We all made such a pet of him! Indeed, we were quite provoked at those everlasting battues, which deprived us of his company in our rides; and he has not, as yet, been long enough accustomed to a gun to take such things coolly. You expect him, I understand, at Christmas? Happy creature! to have such a succession of brothers!"

"Is not that a charming account of dear Hugh, Mamma?"

"It is," said Lady Bertram, "and the good opinion of people like the Vincents gives a young man some consequence, at his first

entrée into society. I am glad of it. Hugh ought to be here on Tuesday night, I think, at latest. Lady Anne writes me that we may expect her on that day. The Allanbys cannot, I should fear, join us till after Christmas Day."

"What will become of Julia Allanby without Arthur to flirt with? But I really believe Hugh may be a very available substitute by this time. Julia is not particular. It is fortunate, as Ada says, to have a succession of brothers, as well for one's friends' sakes, as one's own." And with a gay smile, Emily took up a third letter.

"Here," said Lady Bertram, "is an enclosure for your father, in this note of Lady Mordington's. Ring the bell, my dear, if you please.

Emily obeyed, and a servant answered the summons.

"Take this to Sir Thomas," said Lady Bertram. "Is he in his own room?"

"No, my lady, in the library. Mr. Carmichael is with him."

"Mr. Carmichael?" exclaimed both ladies in a breath. "When did he come?"

"Five minutes ago, my lady."

"Does he dine here?"

"I don't know, my lady. He asked to see Sir Thomas."

"Well, take the note, at all events," said Lady Bertram, "and leave it in Sir Thomas' own room. What in the world can have brought Mr. Carmichael here?" she added to her daughter, as the man left the room.

"Some parish business, I dare say, something requiring the assistance of a Justice of Peace;" said Emily carelessly, and continuing to read her letter.

"But at such a time of day! So dark! and only listen how it rains and blows!"

"So it does!" exclaimed Emily. "What changeable weather! It was such a beautiful afternoon when we came home! But as to Mr. Carmichael, mamma, it would be wonderful in any body else, certainly, to pay a visit at this time of day, but he never does any thing like other people. I declare he gets stranger every day—and more and more of an ascetic! I have no doubt he came out in the cold and dark, rather than in the day time, because it was less agreeable;—a voluntary penance! I believe he will end by going over to Rome; and die a monk of La Trappe."

Lady Bertram smiled, took up another of

her letters, and tried to feel satisfied with her daughter's view of the case; but an 'indefinable dread, for which she could not account, kept creeping on her. She sat listening nervously for every sound; and as minute after minute passed, and still there was none,—no interruption to the silence of the large house,—her uneasiness still increased. The very pulsations of her own heart were audible to her; the ticking of the French clock on the mantelpiece jarred on her nerves to agony. She neither moved nor spoke, but sat in a species of passive expectation of something terrible; whilst Emily, occupied with her letter, neither looked up nor observed the agitation of her mother. All at once there was a sound. Every sense awake, and as it were distended, Lady Bertram felt, rather than heard, the opening of the distant library door. Then succeeded the tread of footsteps descending the stairs,—for her apartments were on the ground floor;—slowly they came down; slowly—heavily,—crossed the hall. The swing door which closed in the passage to her room was pushed open; the footsteps, distinct as those which were audible before his assassination to Henri Quatre, came along the passage,—paused

at the door. There was a sound of painful breathing outside —— a low knock ——

Lady Bertram started from her chair.

“Dear Mamma; how nervous you are!” said Emily, looking up from her letter. It is only Justine, I suppose. I see it is dressing-time. Come in.”

The door opened at these words, and disclosed, not Justine, but her father, his countenance pale as a corpse, his erect and stately frame shaking all over. Behind him came Mr. Carmichael, not less ghastly pale, — an open letter in his hand. Emily stood transfixed; while her mother, sinking again upon her seat, with difficulty gasped out the words — “Tell me, Sir Thomas! Tell me! do not keep me in suspense! My boys——which——?”

“My dear wife!” said Sir Thomas, sitting down by her, and taking her hand, — “endeavour to ——”

“My brothers!” shrieked Emily, wildly clasping her hands, “Arthur ——?”

Mr. Carmichael sadly shook his head. A few low murmured words, —— and then there was a scream from the mother, — so wild, so loud, — so fearful, that it rang through every passage in the building, and brought a crowd

of terrified domestics hurrying to the hall ——

“*Hugh!!!* My boy! my Hugh! *Dead!*
Killed! Shot! My boy—my boy!”

It was even so. The same post which brought to the sister that letter, filled with praises of her youngest brother, had conveyed one to Mr. Carmichael from Lord Sarsfield, the husband of Lady Bertram's sister, who addressed him at once as clergyman of the parish, and as the personal friend of his brother-in-law, imploring him to break to the unfortunate parents the tidings of horror, which his heart failed him in attempting to send by a direct channel. Hugh Bertram, in company with several other sportsmen, had on that day, gone out, full of life and joyousness as usual, to shoot in the pheasant covers; and an hour before his uncle wrote, he had been brought home—a corpse! It appeared that the gun of the youngest of the party, a mere boy, and unaccustomed to cover shooting, had by some unhappy accident got entangled amongst the twigs of a birch-tree,—had gone off just as Hugh Bertram came up, and lodged its whole charge in his right temple. He was killed on the spot. Nothing, Lord Sarsfield said, but the frantic despair of the involuntary homicide,

and the distraction of his whole family, would have prevented his setting off to convey the dreadful news in person; but he did not feel it right to leave home under such circumstances, and must therefore await, with sensations which he did not attempt to describe, the arrival of his brother-in-law.

Sir Thomas set off that very night; leaving to Mr. Carmichael the charge of every necessary arrangement at Kingsconnell. And on the Tuesday, the day on which his mother and sister had so proudly anticipated his arrival,—on that day did the young Hugh indeed come home. Late on that dark winter's afternoon, the hearse containing the mangled remains of what had been so lately full of life, hope, and happiness, stood before the gate of his father's house. Two days after, the family vault of the Bertrams was opened to receive another inmate; and a concourse of the neighbouring gentry and tenantry, amongst whom there existed but one feeling, that of the profoundest sympathy, assembled to follow to that dark receptacle the coffin of the lately blooming and joyous boy. For him, indeed, so far as his earthly career was concerned, there had been no need for regrets that he must ever grow older, or ever

encounter any of the troubles of the world. His brief bright day had gone down ere yet a cloud had darkened it. But what of the other world, the unseen state, into which he had entered? Who had ever uttered a word to warn him that the present life is but a passage to another? No one, save at distant intervals, the brother so long severed from him; and the faithful pastor, who at the awful idea of that young soul, thus summoned unprepared, in one instant, to eternity, groaned in very bitterness of heart; and experienced, as all must have done, who have ever suffered the horror of doubt respecting the weal of the departed object of affection, that longing to utter intercessory prayers in its behalf, at once so natural and so vain an impulse. "Where the tree hath fallen, there shall it also lie."

As the figure of Sir Thomas Bertram, leaning on Lord Sarsfield's arm, and bent as by the weight of twenty additional years, slowly passed from the church-yard, and ascended the carriage which was to convey him back to his desolated home, a low murmur of sympathy arose amongst the humbler spectators who stood clustered round the gate.

"Eh sirs! He's a sair altered man! His grief's weel seen on him."

"But the leddy! she's waur they say,— she's far waur. She hasna' seen the licht o' day sin' the word cam."

"Aye, aye! Lord help us! It's been a judgment-like thing."

"Ye may say that!" And many solemn shakes of the head lent emphasis to the words.

"What are ye a' glowerin' at?" suddenly exclaimed Haverel Patie, the half-witted creature mentioned in a previous volume, who now came up, his crazy brain excited to the utmost by the unwonted spectacle. "It's a great sicht nae doot, but bide awee, bide awee, ye'se get mair o't. The play's no a' played oot yet."

"Whisht, Patie, whisht, my man! Gang awa' hame, that's a braw lad!" interposed a prudent senior.

"Gang awa' hame, quo' he?" retorted the *natural*, in a tone of lofty scorn. "Gang hame yersell, Eben Geddes! I'se gang nane. It's no worth while. I'm thinkin' just to bide here, to be at hand to see the sport when Sir Thammas comes back again."

"Gude guide us!" "Losh keep us a'!"

“Whisht, Patie! wisht for your life!” Such, accompanied by suppressed shuddering, and ominous looks, were a few of the exclamations which followed this speech. He to whom they were addressed, the while, stood looking round him with that air of supreme disdain which frequently characterises persons of his description.

“Whisht for my life! It’s easy to say wisht! Div’ ye no ken, ye puir blinded gowks, that Sir Thammas Bertram has three mair yerrands here yet, afore a’s dune? And the third ’ll be the brawest sport,—for he’ll come wi’ his feet foremost!”

CHAPTER IX.

“ Ritter, treue Schwesterliebe
Widmet euch diess Herz !
Fordert keine andre liebe,
Denn es macht mir schmerz !
Ruhig mag ich euch erscheinen,
Ruhig gehen sehn ;
Eurer Augen stilles Weinen
Kann ich nicht verstehn.”

SCHILLER.

AMONGST all who wept the untimely fate of Hugh Bertram, there was none, beyond his own family and Mr. Carmichael, who did so with deeper grief than Beatrice Lockhart. He had been a sweet engaging child when she first became the companion of his sister ; and during the years of their happy intimacy she had seen him grow up to a manly, intelligent youth, full of heart and kindliness. There had been something in his manner towards herself, on the last occasion of their meeting, which had

particularly touched and gratified her, at a time when her wounded spirit stood much in need of soothing ; and had caused her to recollect him with warm affection ; it may, therefore, be imagined with what grief and dismay she learnt the tidings of his death, and a death so awful ! To think of that young creature, on whom life was just opening in all its fairest hues,—thus cut off in a moment, in the midst of a scene of enjoyment,—to think of his unhappy parents, his sister, his far distant brothers, fondly attached as they all were to each other, wrung her heart and that of the gentle and affectionate Helen, with keen sorrow. But in Beatrice's case the sorrow was deepened by many causes. Bitterly did she reflect, too, on the impossibility of her now doing what her heart would at once have prompted, hastening to poor Emily in her hour of distress, and weeping with her, if she might not console her. There were no enquiries made after the bereaved parents and sister from any quarter, with half the real feeling and interest which prompted those of Beatrice, whenever she saw Mr. Carmichael, and could learn from him how they were bearing their heavy trial. On this subject he could not say

much ; little indeed of what he could have wished. Trial is not necessarily sanctified to the sufferer ; and the spirit in which this was met, was not that which calls down a blessing. There was an absence of submission, a questioning of the will of the Almighty, on the part of the parents, a bitterness, a sorrow refusing to be comforted, on that of the sister ; that species of sorrow which has no softening or hallowing element, because it is one which has reference entirely to this present world, and refuses to look further. Mr. Carmichael used his utmost endeavours to win the unhappy mourners to a humbler and gentler frame of mind ; and many, in the silence of the night, were his fervent prayers for those who did not pray for themselves ; but he had the pain of perceiving that all was as yet in vain, and that no impression such as he desired was made.

It seemed, indeed, as Miss Babie Chisholm remarked, that there were to be no more Christmas merry-makings amongst the inhabitants of Kingsconnell parish, like those of a few years back. The kind and feeling hearts of the Sempill family at once dictated a renouncement of all plans of the sort, whilst

their nearest neighbours were under such severe affliction. But Walter and Helen, who seemed by tacit consent to be given up to their fate, as predestined lovers, enjoyed much quiet and happy intercourse, during the Christmas recess; and the lacerated heart of Beatrice seemed to derive new life from the sight of their happiness. No casual observer, seeing her now, could have divined through what a fiery ordeal that heart had passed within the last months. This time her health did not give way; for it is not certainty of misfortune, but suspense, such as she had before endured, that saps the foundations of life. Now she knew that all was at an end. She knew not why, for Arthur had found himself utterly unequal to confession of the actual fact; his wild and interrupted bursts of grief, remorse, and despair had afforded no precise clue to his real position; and Beatrice, amongst all the conjectures which her busy fancy conjured up, had never dreamt of the reality. Her idea was that he had come under an engagement to his parents, not to renew his addresses to her, and that he could not prevail upon them to release him from it; but all the circumstances, all the words spoken, that day, remained upon her

memory as a confused aggregate of wretchedness, whose component parts it was sometimes difficult to recall distinctly. Of the first few dreadful days after it was over, her recollection was equally confused. All things seemed to pass before her like unrealities. She remembered relating what had occurred to Helen, and receiving from her a narrative of her own meeting with Arthur in the morning; and she recollected making strenuous efforts to appear, and to talk, as usual, amongst the rest of the family; which she felt comparatively easy; for her own private sorrow lay so deep, and was so unconnected with the outer life around her, that it was possible to keep it down. It was not till night,—not till she was alone,—in the scene of the morning's meeting,—not till then that she dared permit herself to remember. Then the full tide of repressed agony forced its way, unseen by human eye,—then, and on many an after night. It was long before she really felt that she should see Arthur no more, long before the habit of years, connecting him with every thought, feeling, and hope, could be uprooted. And perhaps those first days and nights of agony were less dreadful than the blank dreariness of heart which followed. Yet

there was little outward alteration in Beatrice ; little on which any eye but one which read her heart by the light of its own experience, could have fastened to say that she was no longer the same. She pursued her usual occupations ; and entered into all Helen's pursuits with warmth and interest, much more than had been the case during the miserable period of the preceding year. It seemed as if she could not do enough for her sister, or sufficiently labour to make amends for having given the foremost place in her heart to another ; and as if the hopes of happiness which she no longer entertained on her own account, were henceforward to be centered in Helen. But withal, beneath all, "das herz 'war' gestorben, die Welt 'war' leer." The world was disenchanted ; and yet the soul, so long absorbed in an earthly passion, could not disengage its wings from amongst the fragments of its broken idol ; and the dreariness which rendered earth one dismal blank, spread itself like a dim mist over the face of Heaven.

The visit of the two sisters to Miss Alexander, alluded to as in prospect by Emily Bertram, was prolonged till after Easter ; and the quiet and somewhat dignified routine of

the house, the absence of objects full of torturing association, combined with the gentle kindness of Miss Carruthers, and the softened bearing of even the stern Miss Violet, did much to restore the mind of Beatrice to a calmer and healthier frame ; whilst imperceptibly to herself, the inestimable privilege of regularly attending the services of the Church, which except during her residence there she had never been so situated as to enjoy, since the death of her mother, began to produce the blessed effect of soothing and reducing to order the troubled chaos of her soul. The society of the excellent old clergyman continued to be, as it had always been to the sisters, another blessing whose value was more to be traced by its after effects than noticed at the time. Dearly as both loved, and highly as they revered, Mr. Malcolm, his was that species of quiet unobserved influence, which is scarce recognised until it is withdrawn ; and then the consciousness of all that is lost in it begins to awaken.

But the whole period of Beatrice's and Helen's residence with Miss Violet was not destined to pass in the same quiet and unexciting way in which it had begun. Unconsciously to themselves, the two sisters were one

day, in Church, objects of the unceasing observation of a gentleman, evidently a stranger, who was with the family of Mr. Hepburn, one of the county gentry, who resided about two miles from St. Michael's. It was not until rising from her knees to leave Church, that Beatrice caught the eye so intently fixed upon her, and as she did so, experienced the puzzling sensation of having seen the face before, and its being that of some one whom she ought to know, without the most distant notion whose it might be. Combined with this was a strange association, of painful and disagreeable ideas, which were at once accounted for, when on coming out of church Miss Violet's party was met by Mrs. Hepburn, who begged leave to reintroduce her cousin Mr. Sumner, who had accompanied her and her husband to dine with that lady, on an occasion too well-remembered by Beatrice, rather more than two years before. Mr. Sumner claimed her acquaintance, and in so doing, little guessed what a train of sad and bitter thoughts he conjured up. And from this time he became a constant visitor at the house of Miss Alexander; few weeks passing in which he had not spent several long mornings there, besides

being occasionally invited to join the circle in the evening. His society proved a very agreeable addition to theirs, and the two sisters learnt to anticipate seeing him with much pleasure, and to miss him when he failed to appear.

Meanwhile, all unknown to them, these visits conveyed a deeper meaning to Miss Violet; with whom Mrs. Hepburn, a lady-like and pleasing Englishwoman, had in the beginning of their intimacy held a private conference on the subject. She then informed that lady that from the period of their first meeting, her relative had been struck by Beatrice's attractions; but that, being then on the very eve of setting off for Italy, he could not prosecute the acquaintance, which however he had never forgotten, and to renew which, in fact, had been the object of his offering to visit his Scotch friends at so unusual a season. Mr. Sumner was the second son of a gentleman of good family, and considerable property, in one of the southern counties of England. His father had been some years dead, and his elder brother now possessed the estate. He himself, at this time in his twenty-eighth year, was a junior partner

in a large mercantile house, connected with Genoa, where he had spent the last two years; and had only come to pass a twelvemonth or so at home, and return again to make it his residence. All things considered, and his own good looks and gentlemanly manners reckoning for their share of value, it appeared to Miss Violet that if he really were an admirer of Beatrice, he merited encouragement; and that the circumstance of her young relation marrying so speedily, and so well, would convey a keen and well-deserved reproach to the fickle lover who had deserted her. These conclusions the good lady rigidly kept to herself. She was one of those who require no "brother near the throne," to assist them in sustaining the burden of thought, or the responsibility of action. Not even Miss Carruthers received the smallest enlightenment on the subject; but nevertheless, her woman's instinct very speedily arrived at the truth. Beatrice, all this time, profoundly unconscious of his admiration,—her heart, as it were, buried in the grave of her unforgotten love, and the memory of Arthur too vividly, and too incessantly, present with her still, to admit such an idea into her mind respecting any other

man,—proved more captivating to him from the very unconsciousness which imparted such perfect ease and simplicity to her deportment in his company. The bitter heart-sorrow through which she had passed it was impossible for him to guess. Like all persons of vivid imagination and keen sense of social enjoyment, Beatrice's spirits were easily raised to liveliness, even to gaiety, by intercourse with others; and her absence of egotism rendered her prone to sympathy with the joys of those around her, as well as with their sorrows; and prompted her sedulously to keep her own in the back-ground. She found Mr. Sumner an agreeable and intelligent companion. This was all that she thought upon the subject. Little could he dream that many a night, after some hours of animated conversation, often varied by music, had sent him home more than ever enamoured of this captivating and apparently joyous girl, those eyes which had beamed so brightly through the evening were shedding floods of the bitterest tears, unseen by all;—"in the hushed midnight, when the happy slept;" those lips which had smiled with such apparent gaiety were quiveringly pressed, again, and yet again, upon a few relics

which never met the light of day, but scarcely ever failed to be produced from their receptacle, kissed, and wept over, as night came round. Few they were and worthless in all eyes but her own, and she would not have exchanged them for a king's ransom. They consisted of the withered bouquet which she had had on the night of the ball at Kingsconnell; another composed of heather and sweet Gale (or Bog-Myrtle), which Arthur had gathered for her on their last happy expedition to the loch amongst the hills, and which she had worn throughout that evening;—one or two trifling notes from him, which had accompanied parcels of books, and several little poems, or verses for music, of his composition, copied in his own hand. These, and the “Christian Year” in which he had written her name, were all; but what a world within a world,—a life beneath a life, was comprised in that all! And how little could it be comprehended by the calm, reserved, and undemonstrative acquaintance, of whom,—knowing nothing of love but as it had appeared in the passionate and sensitive Arthur, or as it *did* appear in the frank,* open-hearted Walter, who carried his honest and

manly heart upon his sleeve,—it never occurred to Beatrice to think as a lover! —

But this state of unconsciousness was at last brought to a termination by a formal avowal of his attachment on Mr. Sumner's part, accompanied by a request for permission to write to Captain Lockhart on the subject. This event occurred one day, on occasion of his finding Beatrice alone, a circumstance which at his request had been expressly contrived by Miss Alexander, who had sent Helen, under Miss Carruthers' chapéronage, to spend the forenoon at the house of one of their county neighbours; and herself remained ensconced in the dining-room, under the pretext of having accounts to arrange, until after the termination of the interview, which occurred sooner than she expected, and by no means as she hoped.

It was on Helen's return from her visit, that, finding her sister alone in their room, pale, agitated, and with eyes bearing too eloquent testimony to the tears she had been shedding since they parted, her anxious enquiries speedily elicited the fact of Mr. Sumner's offer, and its rejection.

“Oh! Beatrice, dear, how dreadful! What

a painful thing to be obliged to do! And I never, somehow, guessed that Mr. Sumner — yet I don't know, after all," Helen musingly added,—“for some little time past I have had odd suspicions that he admired you very much, dear. Did you never think so yourself?”

“Never, Helen, till quite lately,” replied Beatrice. “I fear I have not behaved well. I fear I ought to have seen it much sooner, if I had not been occupied by other thoughts. It was wrong, and I am very, very sorry. Miss Violet says I have encouraged him—that I have not treated him well. She is so much displeased!”

“Oh Beatrice! Is she? What shall we do? I do feel so terrified for Miss Violet's anger! Was she terribly angry?”

“Not so much angry as stern, severe,—pitiless;—so indignant — so — and I felt so miserable all the time. Oh! if we had but Aunt Helen! *She* would feel —.” Beatrice paused, and bit her lip to restrain a fresh burst of tears.

“And when, dear, did you begin to suspect any thing?” asked Helen, after she had soothed her sister's distress by a thousand

affectionate caresses, and by all that the tenderest sympathy in its cause could do.

“Only a few days ago, darling, from various things he said, and something in his manner; and whenever I really thought I saw it, I did all I could, without rudeness, to withdraw, and make him understand that I could not return such feelings; and I flattered myself that he must have seen it. You may guess how frightened, and how very miserable, I was to-day, when I found myself fairly entrapped, and obliged to listen. Oh! it was so painful! I cannot bear to give pain. And I liked Mr. Sumner so much, if only it had not come to this! Now we shall never see him again. And to think that he may consider himself ill-treated,—think of me as an unfeeling flirt, the character I most despise! Miss Violet said he would.”

“Nonsense, Beatrice!” indignantly exclaimed Helen. “It is too bad of Miss Violet to say so,—just because she knows how easily you can be persuaded to think yourself in the wrong. I am sure Mr. Sumner must know too much of the world, too much of what flirts really are, to think any thing of the sort. I am sure no one could suspect you of trifling

with any one's feelings. What did you say to him, Beatrice?"

"The truth, of course," replied Beatrice. "I told him how grieved I was,—and that I had not thought of him at all in that light, because my mind was engrossed by other things,—and for this I trusted he would forgive me. And I said that I could not love him, for that I had loved another person, and although we were now parted, I could not forget him."

"And he seemed much distressed?"

"Yes, I am afraid he was. He did not say much. He was very kind, considerate,—quiet,—you know——not like——. We don't quite understand that sort of manner,—and I feel afraid of it. He looked very sad. And when at last he found that I could not give any other answer, he rose to go,—and he took my hand, and kissed it. Oh! how wretched I felt!"

"No wonder! Dear! I should have died! And then you were summoned to Miss Violet?"

"Yes—about half an hour after. That was the most dreadful part of it, Helen. I feel that Miss Violet will never forgive me;—

and she has been so kind to us that it is most painful. I could not have done otherwise;— I could not marry Mr. Sumner, but to feel how much I have disappointed her cuts me to the heart; the more so because she will not permit one to show any feeling of the kind. Once offended, she is inexorable. She will not understand that one may deeply regret having displeased her, though one cannot wish to alter the cause of displeasure.”

This was quite true; and so it proved. During the remainder of her young cousins' visit, Miss Alexander continued to make Beatrice sensible, to the fullest extent, of the enormity of her own conduct, in thus refusing an excellent offer, without having any satisfactory reason to assign for it; and the gentle Miss Carruthers, her kind heart aching for “the creature,” as she fondly termed Beatrice, was forcibly reminded of similar circumstances in the experience of her who had first borne that name; and of the similar fiery ordeal through which similar contumacy on her part had caused her to pass. It added to the depth of the kind old lady's sympathy to reflect, as she did, often with tears, that in the case of her daughter no such happy termination to her

trials was reasonably to be looked for, as that which had occurred with the elder Beatrice. "Unless, indeed, Sir Thomas Bertram were dying, which in the course of nature he must do before his son; then what is to hinder it all coming right yet, Ma'am?"

Such was Miss Carruthers' observation to Miss Grace Lockhart, on occasion of a private conference between them, when the latter lady arrived at St. Michael's for the purpose of escorting her nieces home to the Grange. The temptation to impart to her the tale of Mr. Sumner's rejection was irresistible; and never was confidence bestowed on one who prized it more. Miss Grace's regret that Beatrice should have declined such a desirable offer was quite counterbalanced by the rapture which dilated her romantic soul, in meditating on so charming an incident, and still more in being able to relate it, under the seal of the strictest secrecy, of course, at Sempilltower, where her regret was shared, whilst the feeling which had prompted the rejection was fully appreciated. But Miss Grace's most signal triumph consisted in writing a full, true, and particular account of the whole transaction to Mrs. Henry Lockhart, who was now com-

fortably established in a handsome house at Brighton, her mamma close at hand to admire and worship her, and Agatha to enact Souffredouleur, while Anna Maria was safe at school. With her, Miss Grace frequently exchanged letters, and never having forgotten her spiteful commentaries on Mr. Sumner's early admiration of Beatrice, it may be questioned whether being able to say that the latter was about to be married to him, would have been half so delightful to her as having it in her power to enhance her consequence by telling how she had refused him.

CHAPTER X.

“And is this the last, last look of thine
That ever I shall see?

Yet God thee save, and may'st thou have
A lady to thy mind;
More woman-proud, and half as true
As one thou leav'st behind!
And God me take with Him to dwell—
For Him I cannot love too well,
As I have loved my kind.”

E. B. BROWNING.

“Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way:
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.”

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE bursting freshness of an early spring was daily showering added beauty upon the woods of Kingsconnell, “smiling, as if earth contained no tomb.” But the woods were silent, the gardens deserted, the mansion untenanted,

save by servants. The bereaved owners had quitted it before Easter, and were now at Hastings. It had been Sir Thomas's original plan to take his lady and daughter abroad as the season advanced ; with the purpose of again meeting his elder son, and of accompanying him to Italy for the following winter. It seemed as if all shrank from the idea of returning to their beautiful Scottish home. But these arrangements were completely frustrated by the tenor of William's letters. He wrote to announce his resolution of coming home to Kingsconnell, as soon as the season and his own health, would admit of his travelling. The tidings of his brother's death had completely, and for a length of time, prostrated the comparative strength which he had gained ; and it was observable that now, in writing, he said as little as possible on that subject, but left it to be inferred, from his proposing a journey northward, and having gained the consent of his physician to the plan, that he must be greatly better. It was not thus that he wrote to Mr. Carmichael. To him he made no secret of the motives of his return. "I feel," he said, "as if I could not die in peace, away from Kingsconnell. My time is nearly

out, and I have the most intense longing to be there when the summons meets me. Would to God, for the sake of those whose welfare lies nearest to my heart, that I had never been condemned to this exile, which has but for a short space delayed what I always knew to be inevitable ! But I had no right to decline the last chance of life. There was once a time when no stronger wish possessed me, than to die, and be buried here, beside a grave which three years ago closed over the happiness of my existence ; but I now feel that to be of little moment. Wherever our mortal remains may lie, our spirits will be together soon ; and I would fain dedicate the short remnant of my days to the Living whom I must quit, not to the Dead whom I am about to join."

Without guessing at this, the proposed return of their son was a disappointment, as well as a source of anxiety to his parents ; but the manner in which he gave notice of it too plainly showed that his whole heart was in the plan, to admit of their attempting any opposition to it ; and they resolved, therefore, to remain in England until he should land there, and travel down along with him. Their anxiety respecting him, meanwhile, was somewhat

soothed by tidings [from Arthur, of a consummation to all their ambitious hopes which they had scarcely dared to anticipate. He wrote, in brief terms, to intimate that his engagement with Miss Adair had received the sanction of her parents, although owing to various preliminary arrangements which were necessary, no time could as yet be named for their marriage; but that Lord Mountjoye had signified his consent to its taking place as soon as those could be concluded. Thus were the brightest dreams of his mother and sister realized; and the ambitious heart of his father delivered from a load of anxiety on his behalf. There seemed no bounds to the brilliancy of the career now opening out before his son.

The announcement of Arthur's intended marriage was made to Mr. Carmichael, in a letter from Sir Thomas himself; a brief one, in consideration of their approaching meeting, when, as the writer said, he could communicate all particulars; but in which special mention was made of the engagement between his son and Miss Adair as actually subsisting at the period of Arthur's last visit to Kingsconnell. Recalling, as he so vividly did, the young man's evident wretchedness at that time, and coupling

the recollection with that of some of his unconscious revelations of his feelings during the day when the fever first attacked him. Mr. Carmichael drew his own conclusions on the subject, and acted accordingly. The same night on which the letter reached him, it was sent to Beatrice Lockhart, enclosed in a few kind lines from Mrs. Sempill, informing her that it had been given her to read and then to burn; and as it occurred to her that her dear young friend might be spared some annoyance by receiving private and authentic accounts of a piece of news likely to be so much talked of, she would leave it to her to destroy the letter after perusal. She must on no account take the trouble of returning it.

Beatrice followed the injunction; nor did any verbal communication on the subject ever pass between her and Mrs. Sempill; but the silent fervour with which, at their next meeting, she returned the affectionate embrace of the latter, spoke volumes to her kind and feeling heart. Most gratefully indeed did Beatrice own from what pain such consideration had saved her. Now she could hide her feelings; and no one, not even her darling Helen, should ever guess the anguish of this

final wrench to a heart, which she then felt had never ceased to love, nor even to cling to a faint shadow of hope, now to be extinguished for ever. Helen herself was deceived by the calmness with which Beatrice gave her the letter to read,—calmness far surpassing her's on learning the tidings ;—and with which she even forced herself to talk on the subject to her sister. But it was a case in which she felt that to permit what she really suffered to be visible, would lower her in her own eyes. The night avenged itself for this constraint ! Vain were it to attempt describing the agony with which Beatrice sat herself down in the old school-room, whither she had stolen when Helen fell asleep,—there, in the very spot which had witnessed so many hours of happiness—the spot which had been the scene of that last farewell,—to bring before her own mind the fact, never really admitted till now, that from this time forth the memory of Arthur Bertram must be recalled no more ; that to her he must henceforth be as one dead. Had that been all, it had been a pain more calmly borne. But to think of him as heartless, treacherous, unworthy of the love she had felt for him,—to be assured that he never

could have loved her but as the object of an hour, that he never could have been worthy of her heart's devotion to him, this indeed was pain, and bitterness, and desolation. But it must be borne,—and it must be concealed. And she must part,—part at once, with all which recalled his image,—for to think of him now would be sin. Nerved by this consideration, she unlocked her desk, and took from its secret drawer the little relics already mentioned, looked at them once more, then laying them in the empty grate, applied a match to them, and stood calmly by till they were consumed to ashes. One thing still remained to be done, the last and hardest of all. The “Christian Year”—that precious gift of his, which since the day he placed it in her hands had been her companion, counsellor, and friend,—from whose pages he had read to her, with whose exquisite poetry the sound of his voice, the glance of his eye, were inseparably connected,—in which his own hand had traced her name, —— she must part with it,—she must not venture to retain what was replete with such associations;—henceforth its treasury of pure, holy, elevating thought, must be her solace no more. There seemed a species of

retribution in this necessity. For the last time she opened it, to gaze upon his handwriting—turned to the verses in the poem which she had first read on the Sunday after she received it,—that for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity,—and wrote the present date in pencil on their margin, then closed the volume, sealed it up in paper, and placed it in the empty drawer. And as, at this final sacrifice, her imprisoned tears burst forth, and laying her head upon the desk she wept in utter abandonment of soul, she did indeed feel that for her—

.....All bright hopes, and hues of day
Had faded into twilight grey."

It was about three months after this memorable night, on a beautiful afternoon near the middle of August, that Beatrice and Helen were sitting as usual in the school-room, whither they had just returned from the parlour, attracted to it by a visit from Mr. Carmichael, from whom they knew that they should hear something of William Bertram. The family had been about ten days arrived at Kingsconnell; and since then he had never left his room. He was very ill, as even Dr. Chis

holm was compelled to admit; and Sir Thomas, at his urgent request, had written, to endeavour to procure leave of absence for his second son, that he might reach home in time to see his brother yet in life. Mr. Carmichael added that William's anxiety to see his brother was the one only subject on which his mind was not at rest. On all other points he was in a state of perfect peace; but the dread of not living till Arthur arrived was evidently preying much upon him. Mr. Carmichael was with him, he said, every day. William had begged him to be so. Frequently he had found him unable to converse beyond a few words; and at other times comparatively strong, and full as ever of the warmest interest in every person and thing around him. At William's request, he himself had waited on Mr. Malcolm, and asked him again to visit his friend, as he had been used to do during his last stay at home, which the good old clergyman had gladly done, more than once; and was evidently deeply interested in him. It was, Mr. Carmichael added, a comfort to himself to reflect that in this way William would not be deprived on his death-bed, of those last and holiest consolations which the Church of Scot-

land denied her expiring children. This was said in a low voice to the two sisters, who had followed him into the lobby, when he took leave, for the purpose of asking more particulars than they could endure to do before the rest of the party. But it was so evidently by a painful effort that he maintained his usual composed demeanour in talking on the subject, that in sympathy with his feelings, they refrained from many questions which they longed to put, and only enquired if he were on his way to Kingsconnell now? No, he replied, he did not mean to go until the evening. He had various calls of duty for the forenoon, and he generally found that Mr. Bertram was stronger, and more equal to conversation, towards evening. He took his departure, and Beatrice and Helen returned sadly to their usual retreat. The window stood open, and the perfumed air of the glorious August day came wooingly in from the garden, as if to tempt them forth; but both their hearts felt too heavy for its effulgence of light and heat, and leaves and flowers. Helen had mechanically taken up the pencil, which she had laid down on hearing that Mr. Carmichael was in the parlour, and Beatrice was about to resume her

work, as mechanically, when a sound was heard in the garden,—a step upon the walk.—Helen looked up, and uttered a suppressed exclamation, and Beatrice at the same instant arose, but remained standing by her chair, literally because she trembled so violently that she could not advance. Emily Bertram was outside the window, looking in upon them, as if uncertain whether to approach!

Helen recollected herself, and hastily went forward. “Helen,” said Emily, raising her veil as she spoke, and disclosing a face of deathly paleness, and eyes sunken and heavy from tears. “Beatrice!” as the latter in her turn drew near, and held out her hand. “Oh Beatrice! forgive me!” She entered the room at these words, and threw her arms round the neck of her early friend, who could not withstand the old familiar action, and clasped her to her heart.

“Sit down, Emily, dear,” said Helen, in her low kind voice, and drawing forward a chair.

“I have not time,” replied Emily. “I must not delay. Beatrice, I came to ask —— to implore ——” she paused, as if afraid to trust her voice any farther.

“What is it, Emily?” said Beatrice. “There is no need to implore. What can I do to be a comfort to you;—tell me?”—

“Will you come home with me just now?” asked Emily. “Will you, Beatrice? William sent me. He cannot rest till he has seen you again, he says. He bade me entreat you to come and —— to come —— to —— bid him farewell! Beatrice — he is dying!” At these last words her composure gave way, and sinking on the chair which she had declined, she hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept and sobbed unrestrainedly. Nor could either of the sisters speak to answer her. Both were in tears. At last, by a strong effort, Emily checked her’s, and turned to Beatrice.

“I know,” she said, “I know I am asking what I could scarcely expect you to grant, Beatrice. But you were always kind,—and you know how—how William always loved you. Oh! do not refuse this request! I entreat you, do not.”

“Emily, could you imagine that I would?” said Beatrice, in her turn making an effort at self-command. I am ready to go, this instant. I shall not detain you.” She arose and left the room; and Helen, her gentle heart com-

pletely softened by the distress of her whom she had last seen in all the pride of unbroken prosperity, approached Emily, and took her hand, which she pressed between her own.

“Try to calm yourself, dear Emily,” she said. “Whilst there is life, there is hope.”

Emily shook her head. “No, Helen, there is none. There is no hope, and he knows it quite well. It is his composure, his sweetness, his patience—that break my heart. I always loved him dearly, but never as I love him now, I think, now when I must lose him. And to think of his dying in the very prime of youth! He will only be twenty-nine on his birthday. Dying in the midst of all that can render life desirable!”

“But resigned to die,—dear Emily,—more than resigned,—feeling that ‘blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.’ Oh! how thankful you must be for that.” Helen spoke in truthful earnestness and simplicity, as she felt; but she had touched a chord to which there was no responsive note in the heart of Emily. The latter made no reply. She could not look beyond the perishing things of time, which her brother was called upon to quit; and her heart was full of the bitterness, the

murmuring against God, inevitable to unsanctified affliction. A painful silence of a few minutes was broken by the entrance of Beatrice, very pale, but perfectly calm.

"I am ready, Emily," she said. "Helen dear, you will explain my absence."

Emily arose, and kissing Helen, departed along with her companion. They had reached the foot of the garden ere either spoke, and then their silence was broken by Beatrice. She enquired if William suffered much? Sometimes he did, was Emily's reply,—from acute pain in the side, and constant wasting fever; and when that left him, his weakness was so excessive that the slightest exertion brought on fainting-fits. For two days past this had been the case. He had been longing ever since his arrival, to see Beatrice,—had spoken of it repeatedly, and dwelt upon the subject beyond any other,—save one.—Beatrice shivered. She knew what that one was! But hitherto there had been no day on which it would have been possible for him to bear the excitement. This day, however, by one of the sudden turns of his capricious malady, he was very much better; better a great deal than he had appeared since his return home; and he

had so earnestly implored his sister to urge his request to Beatrice in person, that she could not refuse; "though I did, Beatrice," she added, "and I do, feel the extent of the favour I nerved myself to ask. Believe me I do."

"You need not, Emily," replied Beatrice. "There is nothing you could ask me to do, to give one hour's pleasure to your brother, or to console you in your affliction, that you would find me unwilling to agree to. There is no favour in the case. I feel it a comfort to be able to see him again."

Few more words passed between them, in their progress through the luxuriant woods, filled with all the affluence of summer, odorous with flowers, and resonant with the murmuring life of the insect world,—white butterflies glancing across the paths,—blue dragon-flies fixing themselves on the pendant sprays of honeysuckle, and large, heavy-laden humble-bees buzzing in the flowers, or rising on the wing and passing on, with their long, deep droning sound. It was a day and a scene that contrasted agonizingly with aching hearts; and as Beatrice cast her eyes around on all its beauties, a vivid recollection came rushing back upon her mind of one at the same period of

the summer, many years back, when her mother and she, and Helen, passing through these very woods, heard that Sir Peter Bertram was on his death-bed. Had any soothsayer at that moment revealed to her the chain of events which was to connect her fate with that of his family,—could she have cast her eyes forward, from that bright and happy day to this, and beheld herself as she was at this moment, on her way to the side of another and a more mournful death-bed at Kingsconnell, could she have believed it possible? And what would her mother have felt had she been permitted to foresee it all?

The walk was not a long one, ere they found the iron gates opening to admit them to the front of the house; and there, upon the steps of the portico, stood Miss Margaret Bertram, her venerable face wearing an aspect far more aged than when Beatrice had seen it last—and shadowed by a mournful solemnity,—but benevolent as ever. She advanced and affectionately kissed the trembling visitor.

“God bless you, my dear!” she said, “I knew you would come at once. Emily,” turning to her niece, “go to your brother’s room, by the terrace, and tell him that I shall bring

Miss Lockhart to him in a few minutes. She must come with me and rest a little first. It will be better—less exciting for him, my dear, than taking you at once to his apartment.”

So saying, she conducted Beatrice through the principal door, across the hall, and thence to a small room, where, making her sit down, she insisted on her swallowing, though with difficulty, a little wine and water, and by the influence of her own holy calmness, soon succeeded in restoring that of her young friend; who, in a few minutes after, found herself traversing the same passages, under the same guidance, which she had last done when, on the day of her departure from Kingsconnell, two years and a half before, she had gone to take leave of William Bertram.

Miss Margaret's tap at the door of her grand-nephew's room was answered by Emily; who, full of the very bitterness of grief, without its softness, and mistrusting her own powers of self-command, took leave of Beatrice with a silent kiss, and departed as they entered. In equal silence they advanced beyond the Indian screen, to the couch between the fire-place and a window, where, supported by pillows in a half-reclining posture, William Bertram was

lying. He raised himself as Beatrice approached, and clasped both her hands in his without speaking; then, as she sat down in the low chair which stood beside his couch, and Miss Margaret Bertram, perceiving that she trembled violently, untied the strings of her bonnet, and laid it aside, he fixed a long, earnest gaze upon her countenance, drew her gently towards him, and kissed her forehead.

Beatrice did not attempt to speak. She knew the absolute necessity for calmness in such an interview; and her utmost efforts could as yet only ensure it by keeping silence. But not less long and earnest, and as mournful as his own, was the gaze she bent on him, noting each particular of the alteration in his appearance since last she had seen him, lying on that very couch. A change indeed there was. The ample folds of the dressing-gown which he wore, with its large, rich shawl-pattern, concealed the attenuation of his figure; but the hand with which he continued to hold her's was wasted to absolute transparency; the skin looked as if stretched tightly across the white broad forehead and hollow temples, on which the blue line of every separate vein could be distinctly traced, and over which the hair

lay in heavy clinging masses. There was an almost unearthly brightness in the eyes, a spot of glowing pink on the whiteness of the cheek ; above all, an expression in the countenance and in the smile, always beautiful, and now more than ever so,—but not with the beauty of this world,—all of which spoke the truth even to Beatrice's inexperienced eye, and told her that he on whom she looked was indeed a dying man. His eye, the while, was marking the change in her ; the paleness, the sadness, the altered aspect of her fair young face, from its bright look of old,—the volumes of thought and feeling which lay in the depths of her melancholy eyes,—and reading in them the tale of all which she had undergone since they parted. And thus they remained for several minutes, without exchanging a word, while Miss Margaret Bertram, after placing æther, sal volatile, and other restoratives, within reach, arose to leave them.

“Try not to agitate yourself, my dear William,” she said, “or Miss Lockhart will regret her kindness in coming to visit you.”

“No, dear Aunt Margaret,” he replied in a low voice, “there is no danger.”

Miss Margaret laid her hand, with some-

thing of maternal kindness, on the head of Beatrice; then quitted the room, and they were left alone together.

“Beatrice! dearest Beatrice!” said William, pressing her hand. “It was indeed kind of you to come here!”

“Do not call it so,” she replied. “I am only too happy to have it in my power to see you once more.”

“Yes,” he said,—“once more. A last farewell, Beatrice. How have I longed for this! How often have I pined to see you again when far away! It was one of the principal hopes I entertained in returning home; for I felt assured that even after all which has passed, you would not refuse to come and visit me.”

“Oh no, no! You only did me justice.”—Beatrice paused. She could not trust her voice.

“I thought,” he continued, “that it was a comfort which I might have hoped for more than once,—that perhaps some time—a longer space, for renewed intercourse, might have been granted me. But the last sands of life are ebbing away too rapidly now,—after this long, ingering time of slow decline. I feel that I must abandon this hope. I shall never see you again, Beatrice, on this side the grave.”

He paused ; but Beatrice did not reply. Her utmost efforts at self-controul could barely restrain her tears. There was a minute's silence ; then raising her eyes, she met his fixed upon her.

“ Dear girl ! ” he said, “ you have suffered much since we parted. This is not the bright face I remember here. Perhaps even dearer on that very account, recalling more vividly one which I last saw bearing traces of suffering, now at an end for ever. Beatrice, I loved—love you, as a sister. I once hoped to have called you so in very truth. In life and health I could not have said this to you, but on my death-bed you will pardon me.”

“ Pardon you ! dearest—kindest !— ” Again her utterance failed, and she turned away her head.

“ It has been a bitter grief to me, Beatrice,” he resumed, “ all the more bitter because full of mystery. No one, since I left England, has given me any distinct account of my brother's conduct. I know——Beatrice ! it is always a comfort, I think, to be assured of that—I know how much he loved you.”

It was a comfort. Even in that miserable moment, Beatrice felt it so. She turned her

head, and wiped away the tears which had been gathering in her eyes. "William!" she said, "it is all over now; all at an end for ever;—and yet ——"

"Yes," he replied, "I know what you would say. He did love you, Beatrice, most devotedly, in former times; and would to God he had remained true to his better self! On all points save that one, my heart is at rest. It is the last clinging to earth, the last thought which intervenes between me and the things of eternity. If I might but live to see my brother! He is so very dear to me,—and he has so grievously disappointed me! And had it been me alone! But to recollect you, Beatrice, as I saw you last,—and to see you now! What has he not to answer for! What blessings has he not flung away!"

The heart of Beatrice could not, even now, endure to hear blame cast upon Arthur. "There may be much," she said, "much that we shall never know, William. If you had but seen him, as I did."

"Could you,—dare I ask it, Beatrice? It is what I have no right to do but I may not live to put the question to Arthur—and it would remove a weight from my heart to

know the truth. Will you—dearest—grant this last request, and tell me what passed between you?”

“Anything, William, anything you ask me!” said she. “But you are faint—you are sadly exhausted. Do not ask it now!”

“Yes, dearest, it must be now, or it may be never,” he replied. “No, I am not faint. If you will give me a little *sal volatile*, I shall be quite able to hear it.” She did so; then sitting down by him again, her hand in his, she told him all. The whole narrative, down to the last agonizing parting, and Arthur’s previous meeting with Helen,—all that it would at any other moment have appeared to her most impossible to tell, she calmly related to his dying brother. William heard her to the end, and when she had concluded, pressed his lips to the hand he held, and uttered a long deep sigh.

“Unhappy!—misguided!” he exclaimed in a low voice. It is indeed all over. May those who have to answer for it, in part at least, be forgiven sooner than they will forgive themselves! The dark tale is not yet concluded. But you, dearest, may you be blessed, strengthened; purified by these furnace-fires of trial!

So young !” he added, fixing his mournful eyes upon her, so young, so unprotected ! My poor, poor Beatrice !”

“ Young !” exclaimed Beatrice, with irrepressible bitterness of anguish. “ Yes, William, young to have outlived what I have done ; and to have long, long joyless years stretching out before me, a lengthened pilgrimage strewn with the ashes of all the hopes that I have seen consumed ! It is not the strong feelings of youth that I dread,—it is the dull weary remnant of life, after youth is gone. Oh ! happy you, who will never know it !”

“ My Beatrice, my own dear Beatrice,—happy they, and they alone, who fulfil their appointed task, be it what it may, and tarry out the Lord’s time for release ! Look beyond ;—look above ;—above those mists that hide the face of Heaven. Listen to the dying counsel of one who has so deeply erred as I have done, who lived without God in the days of health and vigour, and who finds himself, by a righteous retribution, now/when he would gladly spend and be spent in the cause of his Saviour, forbidden the privilege he slighted before ! Listen to me, dearest.”

“ Listen to you ? Even as I would listen

to an angel," said Beatrice. "But I can never be like you."

"You can be,—please God, through Him strengthening you, you will be—something far better,—far higher—a nature made perfect by suffering,—" he replied. "But it is a long pilgrimage—a toilsome path. Pray for faith to tread it. Remember that life was not bestowed for feeling, but for acting. Long, long after the wild joys and wild sorrows of youth are over, long as God spares you here, it is not to 'a dull weary remnant of life,'—it is to a path of duty,—to discharge some appointed work,—to be the steward of some gifts of His,—to attain, by His grace, more and more resemblance to Him, and conformity to His will. The toil must be here, Beatrice. The fruition will be hereafter."

"Oh! if I could remember that, William! But the path seems so long! And all I love will leave it one by one, as you are about to do!"

He pressed her hand for some minutes in silence, then recovering his composure, spoke again. "Would I could take you with me, Beatrice! Not so much to deliver you from the miseries of this miserable world, as to save you, my beloved, from the danger of falling

away ! Trial may beset you. It may not lead you to God. It may come between you and Him. Pray, dearest, watch and pray ! There is no other safety. The longest path will seem short to you when viewed from where I am now."

"But oh ! William, it seems long from where I am ! It is not now, looking at, and listening to you, whom I have loved like a brother ; it will not be even when weeping for you, William, and thinking of your having entered into rest. I have felt all that ere now. My blessed mother, whom you will see long ere I shall do, and to whom you will perhaps speak of her children, in the world of rest,—left us long ago ; I know what it is to mourn for the sainted dead. But the living, who must live without them, who must go on in their desolate paths ! Pity me, William ! Pray for me ! I am very miserable, and very faithless."

"Pity you, Beatrice ! If my pity, my love,—my deep sympathy,—could console you !" He paused. "I can at least pray for you, dearest ; you have long had my prayers. And One whose pleadings are all-prevailing, will be heard on your behalf. May He cause a better

light than that of sun or moon, to arise on your dreary pilgrimage. May He give you the spirit of His children, to lay your own will at the foot of His Cross, and desire nothing but strength to follow Him in the narrow way."

He was silent; and as he lay back, with closed eyes, while Beatrice, through the tears which dimmed her's, sat gazing on him, it seemed to her that he could scarcely have looked more still, more calm, if the last long sleep had already fallen upon him. She turned her eyes from him, and cast them round the apartment; its elegant and luxurious appliances,—its books, its treasures of art,—then looked to the windows, where through the soft muslin draperies which shaded them, the warm sunbeams were falling on flowers within, and flowers without,—lighting up with such splendour all the lovely scene, whose dying heir could no longer find enjoyment in its beauties. But it was more sad to think of Arthur in life, and health, surrounded by all that this world could bestow, than of William on his early death-bed. And as Beatrice's eyes at length fell upon the old picture of the children, where it still hung in the old place, a thousand

dark and mournful auguries connected with the history of those who had gone before, crowded on her mind; a thousand recollections of the first time she had seen that picture, and of all which had come and gone since then. She did not for some minutes perceive that William had again looked up, and that his eyes had followed the direction of hers'. He said nothing, but his silent pressure of her hand told her that he understood what she was thinking of. But Beatrice now felt that their interview had been sufficiently prolonged; and with a pang almost like death darting through her heart, she arose from her seat.

"One moment," whispered William. He covered his eyes with his hand, as if uttering an internal prayer, then taking hold of both hers', he looked her intently in the face.

"We shall see each other face to face no more, Beatrice. Never more, till we stand before the throne of God to receive our eternal doom. My Beatrice! My sister! Oh! may it be in joy, and not in sorrow, that we meet again. May it be as those who have kept their lamps trimmed and ready for the coming of their Lord! When troubles press hard upon you, Beatrice, when the minute thorns of life,

which are harder to bear than its fiery darts, lie thick upon your path, till your spirit feels ready to faint within you,—remember the last prayer of your brother who has gone before you,—keep your confidence stedfast unto the end, and look to the rest which remaineth for the faithful. Fare you well, dearest! Fare you well!”

He drew her towards him, and clasped her in his arms. One speechless, tearless kiss she pressed upon his brow, as she arose; then, ringing the bell at the head of his couch, she took up her bonnet, and quitted the room by the glass door. At that moment it would have been impossible for her to have spoken, or to have met any one, with calmness. But it was not until she had left the house far behind her, and descending into the paths by the river-side, had reached a spot which till that day she had never dared to revisit, and fallen on her knees beneath the tree,—not until then that the agony she had been suppressing found a vent; and amid tears, and sobs, and cries of inarticulate despair, the conviction that she had looked her last on William Bertram, and on Kingsconnell, forced its way to her bursting heart.

CHAPTER XI.

"She fondly cherished every remembrance of their words and deeds, of their gentleness and purity. * * *

They were not severed, but only out of sight. The Communion of Saints was still one. Nothing was changed but the visible relations of an earthly life: all the unseen relations of love and fond attachment still remained, nay, were knit more closely; for they that were yet watching had for them an intenser love, softened and purified by sorrow; and they that slept were filled with the love of God. The unity of the Saints on earth with the Church unseen is the closest bond of all."

ARCHDEACON MANNING.

IN the evening of this day Mr. Carmichael paid his promised visit to William Bertram; whom he found better, and more able to talk, than might have been expected after the agitating interview of the afternoon. Their conversation was long and confidential, if possible, more than ever so. Warmly interested as of old, in all which concerned his friend, William drew from him an avowal of all the doubts and perplexities which were now beginning to harass the minds of Edward Irving's followers

in the Church of Scotland, and listened to confidences on the subject which no ear but his own had ever before received. And years after that night, the words of gentle sympathy, and of high and holy counsel, which fell from those lips so soon to be silenced in the dust, recurred to the heart of the hearer with a force even greater than they had carried at the time. It was the last conversation which they ever held together; the last time on earth when the heart of the solitary clergyman was ever fully opened to another human being. Ere it ended, William had placed a small parcel in Mr. Carmichael's hands, and given him some directions concerning its delivery, which caused a spasm of anguish to contract, for a moment, his calm grave countenance; but which, in his wonted low and quiet voice, he gave him a solemn promise to observe. He too, unequal to conversation with any one else after such an interview, and dreading, because he felt himself powerless to allay, the anguish of the parents and sister, left the apartment of his friend by the terrace-door, and paused for a few minutes ere proceeding on his homeward way, to lean over the parapet, and gaze down upon the lovely scene below. Never had he seen Kings-

connell in greater perfection of beauty,—the foliage richer, the flowers more luxuriant. The lovely Pleasance spread beneath his eye, the light of sunset faded from its bowers, and the crystal twilight beginning to be whitened by the beams of the moon, just rising over a clump of trees. His eye fell upon that spot; and suddenly, with the vividness of lightning, there started up in his mind the reminiscence of a long-distant day, when from that identical place, he had looked on that same spot with William. The living form of his friend seemed to rise before him, as in all the vigour of his young manhood, he had beheld him standing there, and pointing towards those trees. The very words he spoke returned. “Will the Curse go on working? Shall you ever, I wonder, Carmichael, stand here when that question has been answered, and remember the day I asked it?” Answered? In the untimely grave of Hugh,—in the death-bed of William—the answer had indeed begun to be given. And where would it end?—Mr. Carmichael groaned, covered his eyes with his hand, as not enduring to look any longer on a place haunted by such a memory, then turned away, and moved rapidly on.

He returned to Kingsconnell on the evening of the following day, and was admitted to sit for a short while by William, whom he found in bed, and totally unequal to conversation, beyond a few whispered words. He had that forenoon received the Holy Communion from Mr. Malcolm; and had continued comparatively well until about an hour after that was over, when he had been seized with fainting, in consequence of which the strictest quiet was enjoined by Dr. Chisholm. There appeared to Mr. Carmichael a change in his countenance, which filled him with heart-sinking apprehensions; and he left him in deep depression of spirit, too painfully verified on the next day. Walking over to Kingsconnell in the afternoon, he encountered at the head of the avenue a mounted groom, who galloped past him as if life and death were on his speed. And so in truth they were. The front door stood open; alarm and confusion seemed to pervade the house; and Mr. Carmichael could not for some minutes find any one to answer his enquiries; until, meeting Miss Margaret Bertram's maid, an old family-servant, who burst into tears at the sight of him, he learned from her that Mr. Bertram

was hopelessly ill. The same blood-vessel which he had before ruptured had again given way, and a few hours would too probably terminate the scene!

This mournful news, proclaimed by the haste in which Dr. Chisholm had been summoned, was not long in spreading round the neighbourhood, and excited the deepest sympathy and anxiety in all who heard it. Late that night, Helen Lockhart stood watching at the foot of the garden, for the return of Lowry Mac Fyke, who had been sent over to Kingsconnell on a message of enquiry. Beatrice remained in the school-room to receive her sister's report. She could not nerve herself to hear it from a servant. But it was nothing more decisive than that of a few hours previously. There was no material alteration. Mr. Bertram was still alive,—perfectly conscious, but unable to speak. Mr. Carmichael had remained at Kingsconnell; and Dr. Chisholm, after leaving on some indispensable visits for a couple of hours, had returned to pass the night there.

It so happened that on the following morning, owing to some cause connected with the domestic economy, no messenger could be

found to carry another enquiry; and scarcely waiting till breakfast, which neither of them could taste, was over, Beatrice and Helen resolved to go through the woods to the North Lodge, and there ascertain what was the report from the mansion house. They did so, and learned from the weeping gate-keeper that things were much the same; only that the patient was not expected to survive the day. The sisters were just turning from the door, in tears, when a post-chaise covered with dust, and drawn by four reeking horses, whom the post boys were urging on at full gallop,—came tearing furiously along the high road, and swept like a whirlwind in at the open gate. For one single instant, the face of Arthur Bertram, pale as a spectre, and straining a wild and eager gaze from the window, was visible to the eyes of Beatrice! At the unexpected apparition, he sank back in the carriage with a shuddering groan, and covered his face with his hands; and when he again looked up, the vehicle, rocking from side to side in its frantic speed, was nearly at the head of the avenue. Beatrice and Helen, the while, stood gazing after it in silence; then with an ejaculation from the latter of —— “poor Ar-

thur! oh! poor Arthur! God help him!" to which Beatrice responded by a low "Amen!" —they pursued their homeward path through the sunlight and shadow that chequered the woods; entered the school-room by the old familiar way, and sat down in silence there, as if awaiting the next tidings. These were not long delayed. Between three and four o'clock that afternoon, tidings reached the Grange that all was over! And from that time until the day of the funeral, no one saw any thing of Mr. Carmichael, who was understood to be constantly at Kingsconnell, and whose duty was taken by a young preacher from St. Michael's on the Sunday which intervened. During all this time the sisters never left the house to go beyond the garden. The long bright days passed in a species of trance to Beatrice. Her spirit could scarcely be said to be present where her bodily frame abode. In fancy, the whole mournful scene in her immediate neighbourhood was for ever before her eyes, and that so vividly, that she sometimes started when recalled to a sense of where she actually was.

The day of the funeral arrived; more bright, more warm and beautiful than any of

its predecessors, as if in mockery of the woe it was to witness; and late in the afternoon Miss Grace sought her nieces in the school-room, to retail to them, with many tears, the account of the ceremonial which she had just received from Dr. Chisholm. The worthy doctor felt deep and unaffected grief for William Bertram, and it had been a comfort to him to call at the Grange and talk it over; to tell of the long funeral train, the concourse of people assembled in the churchyard, attracted by the novelty of the Burial Service, read by Mr. Malcolm;—the grief of all who had known Mr. Bertram;—the sorrow of the poor, to whom, through Mr. Carmichael, he had been so munificent a benefactor,—the inconsolable distress of his own servant, who had adored his master. Sir Thomas, the doctor said, had astonished every one by his composure; for at the time of Hugh's death he had been so completely broken down. "But there was another person," added Miss Grace, "more to be pitied than any there."

"Arthur!" exclaimed Helen. "Oh! what did you hear of him, Aunt Grace?"

Miss Grace hesitated. "Do tell us, dear Aunt Grace," said Beatrice, looking up.

“Well, dear, since you wish it. I was afraid of giving you pain, Beatrice. Poor young man ! He has been in a state of utter prostration, the doctor says, since his brother died ; or else giving way to such bursts of grief and despair as are dreadful to hear. Mr. Carmichael has been with him constantly. They did not expect that he would be able to attend the funeral to-day. He—he spent the whole of last night alone in his brother’s room !” Miss Grace paused to wipe away her tears.

“Dreadful !” sobbed Helen. “What,—all alone ?”

“Alone. He insisted upon it. But Henderson, poor dear Mr. Bertram’s servant, and Mr. Arthur’s own man, remained in the next room unknown to him. They really could not go to bed, they said. Henderson told the doctor he never would forget it to his dying day. He was nearly senseless—perfectly worn out with the violence of his own distress, when they at last took courage to go in after daylight, and persuade him to leave the room. No wonder !”

“No wonder !” reiterated Helen. “His last farewell to his brother. And such a brother !”

“And so nobody thought he would have had self-command enough to go to the funeral. But he went, though he did not appear to the company beforehand. Anything so ghastly pale, so heart-stricken, (that was the doctor’s own word) as his look, he says he never did behold. The nearest relations, and those for whom there was room, went into the vault; the rest remaining outside:—but Mr. Arthur lingered long behind all the others; till at last Mr. Carmichael went in to him. Then he came out, leaning on Mr. Carmichael’s arm, and he almost supported him to the carriage.”

“And oh! the desolate return home! the empty bed,—the empty room!” said Beatrice. “How well I recollect them all! One never really feels what death has taken away till then.”

It was evening. The shadows of twilight were stealing over the garden; and the sisters were again alone in the school-room, to which they had retreated after tea. Helen was reading near the window; in which Beatrice, with a book in her lap, sat gazing out upon the clear obscure above,—the motionless trees,—the flowers,—the familiar garden-paths; tear after tear the while, springing to her eyes, and

slowly trickling down her cheeks. The silence was suddenly interrupted by a low tap at the door. It opened, and Mr. Carmichael entered. Helen advanced to meet him with a cordial, but silent greeting. Beatrice sank back in the chair from which she had arisen, and her tears broke forth unrestrainedly.

“My dear Miss Lockhart!” began he in a low and faltering voice, as he took a seat beside her. “My dear Miss Lockhart!” Again he was obliged to pause. The emotion which he had that day successfully struggled against, at the grave of his dearest friend, had nearly gained the mastery now. There were many thoughts, many dreams, many buried hopes, connected with the sight of Beatrice; and to witness her distress, as he must witness it, with the calmness of a spectator, whilst he would have given worlds for the power of consoling it in a different character, was a trial which had almost proved too much, even for his fortitude.

“Excuse me, Mr. Carmichael,” at last said Beatrice, looking up. “I have no right to add to your sorrow in this way. I ought to recollect all that you have lost.”

“Yes,” added Helen, in her gentle, soothing voice; “Mr. Carmichael has had so much to

bear these last few days. It was very kind of you to come to us to-night, Mr. Carmichael."

"Very kind! unspeakably kind!" said Beatrice.

"Do not say so," he replied. "It is no effort to come here. Besides, I have a message for you, Miss Lockhart." Even through the deepening twilight, Mr. Carmichael could see the sudden paleness that overspread the countenance of Beatrice at these words; he could hear the breathless throbbing of her heart; and he hastened to proceed. "I came to discharge a commission given me by—by my departed friend,—on occasion of the last conversation we ever had together; the evening of that day when he bade you farewell. He then entrusted me with this, and desired me to give it you after his funeral, as the last token of an affection which you must still consider your's, although the grave had come between you." He placed in her hands, at these words, a parcel sealed up in white paper. "It was," he added, "one of the things which he treasured most on earth; and on that account he selected it as the fittest to recall him to your memory."

In awe-struck silence Beatrice undid the

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parcel. It contained the "Christian Year" which had belonged to Violet Sidney. On the fly-leaf, beneath their united names, these words were traced, in a hand yet more feeble and unsteady than that with which Violet had written the name of William, ere returning the book to him on her death-bed.

"BEATRICE LOCKHART,
THE DYING GIFT OF HER FRIEND, WILLIAM
BERTRAM.—'BEHOLD, I KNOW THAT YE...
SHALL SEE MY FACE NO MORE. THEREFORE
WATCH.'

AUGUST, 1829."

There was a folded paper within the book, which was also inscribed with the initials W. B., and the same date. It contained a lock of his hair, cut off, as Mr. Carmichael informed Beatrice, by his own hands.

"You were with him to the last, Mr. Carmichael?" said Helen.

"I was," he replied. "He had made it his request that I should. They were all with him, during that last night of his life. It was a privilege to witness so holy, so calm, a death. There was no suffering,—only a slow, gradual sinking. But the few words he uttered, and his every look, were full of peace, full of sweetness, and of tender consideration for those

around him. For himself all was faith and trust."

"Do tell us," said Helen, "about his poor, poor brother's arrival? Was he able to speak to him?"

"Once only," answered Mr. Carmichael. "Repeatedly, through the earlier part of the morning, he had looked towards the door, when it chanced to be opened; and Miss Margaret Bertram whispered to me that he had all along calculated on the possibility of his brother's arriving about that period; and had expressed to her the most anxious wish—had it been the will of God,—that he might be spared, so as to see and converse with him before his death. It pleased the Lord to grant one part of the wish only. Sir Thomas, who was nearest the door of his room, was summoned out of it, a little after ten o'clock; and William, who had for some time lain in a species of stupor, with his eyes half closed, seemed suddenly to rouse himself at the incident. He looked up, and turned his face towards the door, with such an expression of intense expectation as I can hardly describe. No one had power to speak, almost to breathe, during the few minutes that elapsed; when at length the door re-

opened, and Sir Thomas appeared, followed by Arthur."

"Poor, poor Arthur!" ejaculated Helen.

"Yes," said Mr. Carmichael. "It is the Living, not the Dying, who in such cases are to be commiserated. I have seen much of suffering, but never in my life did I see,—and may God forbid I should ever see again—a countenance of such repressed anguish, such despair, as Arthur's at that moment. Speak he could not. He knew that any agitation might be fatal to his brother, and he had sufficient self-command to controul himself. William extended his arms, and he threw himself into them. I heard him say, in the faintest whisper, 'My beloved Arthur!' and these were the last words he ever uttered."

"But he survived a short while after?" said Helen, wiping away her tears.

"He did. About two hours. So long as consciousness remained, his eyes continued fixed upon his brother; his hand clasped in his. And Arthur leant upon his bed, immovable,—like a statue,—but for the deep gasping sobs which in spite of his utmost efforts, from time to time forced their way. Thus it was till all was over. And then —— I cannot attempt to describe the scene."

"Do not," said Helen. "We can imagine it."

"You cannot," he replied. "Pray that you never may."

"Poor Arthur!" again repeated Helen. "This will haunt him all his life. It may cause a great change in him."

"By the grace of God," solemnly replied Mr. Carmichael, "all great sorrows may do so. They are so intended. But they do not always; least of all amongst those whose feelings under affliction are most violent at the time. In youth, we imagine that all sorrows must be immortal, all profound impressions lasting. But it is not so in reality."

"And yet," said Beatrice, for the first time venturing to trust her voice, "there are some sorrows which never are, and never can be forgotten."

"There are," he replied. "But even then, they retreat into the back-ground of life. They cease to influence its daily on-goings. There they are, but they lie far beneath the outer-current. No, Miss Lockhart, advancing life teaches us no sadder lesson than the fact, that the stamp of change and decay is on all things here below,—on our best and holiest feelings as well as our warmest affections. All earthly

fires require to be revived by a hot coal from the Altar, if we would not have them consume in their own ashes. But now, it is getting dark, and I must bid you good-night. May God bless you both."

Mr. Carmichael returned to his solitary home, past the church-yard whose clay had that morning closed over the friend of his soul. And that soul, and He who created it, alone knew the depths of desolation, the anguish of heart, with which in his midnight chamber, he sat that night, and called up past years in review before him, and questioned of the dreary future what its course should be. Wilder thoughts too were with him in the watches of the night. His mind, by nature inclined to the imaginative and the mystical, and having this bent fostered in the highest degree by the speculations in which the followers of Edward Irving so largely indulged, overstepped the boundaries of the grave in meditating on his departed friend. He endeavoured to picture to himself the present condition of the disembodied spirit, to conceive of it as still cognisant of earthly things,—as, perhaps, even in the world of rest, longing to be able to say all that death had caused to be left unspoken. "And oh!" he exclaimed to himself, "if ever perfect

Rapport existed on earth, between one soul and another, such was the case with his and mine. Might but the wish of my heart be granted,—might I but see my friend again, might I but be able to fulfil his last desires, God knows I should not shrink from the sight, the presence of him whom I so dearly loved. God knows how I long to behold him once more, even as he now is.” With clasped hands, and bended knees, he uttered a prayer to this effect. And, doubtless, if ardent desires could have availed to break down the partition,—how slight we probably little imagine,—which divides soul from sense, spirit from matter, the fervour of his petitions might on this night have sufficed to procure the boon he prayed for. But it is not thus,—not upon those who long for such mysterious communications, that they are in general bestowed. The mind which too rashly desires to penetrate into the deep things of the Almighty, is not the one selected for such enlightenment; and in his case, fervently as he prayed,—“there was neither voice, nor any to answer, neither any that regarded.”

Beatrice, the while, in her chamber, was pouring out her very soul in tears over the last gift of William Bertram. Nor did the singular

coincidence escape her, of this restoration of the same work of which she had felt it her duty voluntarily to deprive herself. She turned over the pages of this second "Christian Year," and as she noted the passages marked by the hands of Violet or of William, a bitter sense of contrast forced itself upon her heart. "It is, indeed," she said, "the living, not the dead, who are to be commiserated. Who would not rather die as Violet Sidney died, than live as I must do?"

But calmer, holier, better thoughts, came to her in time from dwelling on this mute record of the Faithful Dead; and never did she again join in one of the most beautiful and holy of prayers, that for the Church Militant, without mentally connecting those two names with her mother's in the thanksgiving, whose full depth of meaning it needs a sanctified sorrow to appreciate. "We also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear."

CHAPTER XII.

“ ‘ Should ’ I let thee feed thy soul with gloom,
And with slow anguish wear away thy life,
The victim of a useless constancy ?
I must not see thee wretched.”

COLERIDGE.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER TO MRS. GEORGE
SEMPILL, FROM MISS MUIRHEAD.

Sempilltower, Feb. 20th, 1830.

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“ I HARDLY think I have any other news to give you, dear child ; having told you all the doings of the few neighbours whom we have left. We miss the two dear girls at the Grange, most sadly ; but for their own sakes we could not sufficiently rejoice in Mrs. Lockhart Clephane’s inviting them to stay with her during the spring months. Walter was, as you may

believe, enchanted at the invitation ; though he swears they never would have had one but for the circumstance of the remaining girl, Johanna, "happening," as he phrases it, "to have achieved the grand object of all regulation-mammas and young ladies, matrimony." Her wedding was a gay affair, and the girls seem to have been out a good deal since then. Walter says Helen is so much admired, that he cannot sufficiently applaud his own prudence, in having secured her last Christmas ; and he rather thinks Mrs. Clephane owes him a grudge for it. This was in his last letter ; and you can't think how the Laird laughed and enjoyed the joke ! but the Major, when my sister had contrived to make him hear it, took it up quite hotly ; and declared that Mrs. Clephane had a great deal of assurance to owe Walter a grudge for any such thing. Helen was far too good and pretty, and too like Mrs. George, to be allowed to go out of the family ; and where would Mrs. Clephane find any of the Edinburgh puppies good enough for her ? He has been quite "short in the temper," as David Bryce calls it, ever since, and I believe is seriously afraid of some attempts being made on dear Helen's constancy to Walter ; but as I told

him, he really need not fear that, when they had been in love with each other ever since they were children here together. And speaking of that, dear, perhaps Helen has not told you that Walter has just had a highly satisfactory letter from Captain Lockhart, approving of the engagement? None of us could ever doubt that he would do so, but still it is a great relief to all our minds; and he concurs with Mrs. Walter, and the Laird, and Reginald, in wishing the marriage to take place next autumn, say August or September, by which time he is sure to have landed, and got his vessel paid off, and all business over, so as to come down here. We only hope that something may occur to prevent his lady accompanying him, for really, though it sounds ill-natured, her presence would be no addition to our comfort! They are a young couple, to be sure. Helen will not be twenty till September; and Wat, dear fellow! is not quite four years older; but for my part I highly approve of early marriages, in cases like this, where there has been such a long attachment; and such a steady creature as Wat is too! Then, you see, his poor dear father left him pretty well off. They will not have less than six hundred

a year to begin with, one way and another; and we hear that Wat is expected to do well at the bar. They must live in Edinburgh, of course; but we shall have them here in the vacations, when Mrs. Walter does not claim their company. And yet, sometimes, as my sister and I say to each other, our hearts smite us for rejoicing so much in Helen's coming amongst us, when we think of Beatrice being left all alone; as if we were selfishly forgetting the change it will make to her. To be sure, you may say she will not be much alone; not much at the Grange; but still it does make a world of difference when one of two sisters marries, and such attached sisters! In short, we have many sad thoughts about Beatrice, poor dear! She has lost favour with Miss Alexander too, ever since her refusal of that Mr. Sumner. And considering Arthur Bertram's conduct, I must say he very little deserved that she should have declined a good offer for the love of him! It makes one sad, though, to see the change a few years have made. Kingsconnell again standing empty, after all the gay doings that used to be there; and the vacant gallery, Sunday after Sunday, where one can still fancy one sees all that fine

looking family,—that beautiful girl, and those three elegant young men. Alas! alas! the flower of the flock is laid low. And yet it was impossible to help liking Arthur Bertram. No wonder your poor dear niece did! He is still abroad. He returned to —— you know, very soon after his poor brother's death; glad, no doubt, to run away from his sorrow, as men do; but we hear that he is to be released from his diplomatic engagements before Midsummer, and to return to England for his marriage. His beautiful bride and her parents are at Milldenhanger. The Bertrams are only remaining in England until the wedding is over; and then they mean to go abroad; and I do not believe that Arthur will be in any hurry to revisit this neighbourhood; so there is no saying how long Kingsconnell may stand untenanted. I declare, all these things make one think the place is not canny. It is a great wonder to us all that Miss Bertram does not marry. And that subject reminds me to tell you, what I know you will be glad to hear, that my sister has promised Jessy Christie to Helen when she is married. She will be a perfect treasure to her, I am sure."

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Some little time after the above letter reached Mrs. George Sempill, she received one from her eldest niece, making mention of her having most unexpectedly encountered her former lover, Mr. Sumner, at a ball in Edinburgh; and of his having renewed their acquaintance; at first with a considerable degree of stiffness and hesitation; which, however, speedily gave way to his old manner, as the intimacy began to increase by imperceptible degrees. Beatrice could not deny that she felt glad to see him again. She had always liked him, and found the attraction which imaginative persons do find in such a deportment, in his calm reserved gentleness. She had felt grateful for the preference which she grieved that she could not return; and had greatly missed his society when he quitted St. Michael's. But the circumstance above all others favourable to a renewal of his hopes, was that of his image being associated in her memory with a sensation of pain and self-reproach, excited by Miss Violet's accusations of her having treated him unfairly. To a disposition like her's no surer method could have been devised of fixing her thoughts upon him. She had questioned herself many times how far her

own abstraction and inadvertence at that period might have laid her open to such a charge; and the idea gave a softness to her manner on their again coming in contact, which it was impossible for him to interpret as any thing but encouragement.

On his side, Edward Sumner had, as Helen felt assured he would, entirely acquitted Beatrice of anything so opposed to the transparent simplicity of her character; and had given full credit to her explanation of her feelings at the time of her refusal. But he had found it not so easy to forget her; and having ascertained from his friends in ——shire, that she was still unmarried, had delayed his return to Italy in order to venture a second attempt. It was this which had brought him to Edinburgh; and which now led him to obtain an introduction,—no difficult matter,—to the hospitable house of Mr. Lockhart Clephane, where he soon became a frequent guest. It was impossible that Beatrice could a second time be blind to the motives of his conduct; and at first, the idea of admitting his addresses caused her acute pain. But it was not easy to discourage them; and to a disposition eminently alive to affection, and sensitive to its manifestations,

there is something so pleasing in the consciousness of being beloved, that the attempt at repulsing the attentions of a determined lover is more difficult than can be conceived by those who are framed of sterner stuff. Edward Sumner's attentions were calm and quiet, like himself; there was no passion in anything he did or said; but he devoted himself to Beatrice, he watched her eye, he anticipated her every wish, until she learned first to expect to see him as a matter of course, than to feel a blank when he did not come; and often to reflect, with an aching heart, upon the contrast between the loveless life she must lead at the Grange after her sister should be gone,—dwelling as she must then do, amongst the ghosts of departed joys,—and the pleasure,—the soothing sensation of being a first object to another human being; of feeling herself of consequence to the happiness of another. It were long to dwell upon what may so easily be imagined, the imperceptible degrees by which the consummation was reached. Suffice it to say that the second offer of Edward Sumner was not rejected. He made it with a knowledge of her previous attachment to another, which she herself had been the first to impart to

him; and he felt that he could implicitly trust what she said, when she assured him that although she never could again feel as she had done to the object of her first affection, yet that she was certain of her own single-hearted desire to render him happy, and of a degree of regard which every day's farther intercourse would tend to strengthen. With this assurance he professed himself satisfied. He was, as he told her, no enthusiast. Beatrice felt that he was not. He was very different from herself. Even as a lover, she instinctively knew that there was much in her mind with which his had no affinity; and yet she sincerely liked him; and looked, and felt, very happy; almost as happy as Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart Clephane, whose triumphant satisfaction in this third matrimonial achievement, taking place under their own auspices, was great and unmingled. In Helen's good match they felt that they had had no share; and this consideration a good deal diminished their interest in it; but both were persuaded that Mr. Sumner would never have mustered courage to come forward again, had they not afforded him so much quiet and judicious encouragement; and to have married off two daughters and one

niece in the space of a few years, in a place so little celebrated for marrying and giving in marriage as Edinburgh, was certainly something to be proud of!

"It is such a nice connection!" said Mrs. Clephane, in a tone of calm self-gratulation to one of her particular friends. "Mr. Sumner's family so pleased! Beatrice has had charming letters from his mother, his elder brother, and sisters; and her father writes in terms of the highest satisfaction of her choice."

"And Mr. Sumner is a very nice person, you say," responded the lady. "Is he handsome?"

"Why, yes, rather. You will be able to judge for yourself presently. He is very gentlemanly;—straight features,—large blue eyes,—grave and quiet, but with a very pleasing smile; certainly rather handsome than otherwise; but a great contrast to Walter, who is full of life and glee."

"And may I ask, what are your plans? When do the two marriages take place?"

"As to that, the precise time depends more upon my brother-in-law than any one else. Every one seems to agree in wishing them both to be on the same day, and I think it cannot

be later than August; for Mr. Sumner must positively be in Italy before winter, and of course he wishes to introduce Beatrice to his family before that, and to spend some little time with them."

"In Italy? They are to live there, then?"

"They are, at Genoa. It is the only drawback to the marriage,—the separation between the sisters, poor things! Were it not for that, I am sure Beatrice would enjoy the idea of Italy as a residence. Mr. Sumner leaves Scotland in about a fortnight. He wishes to have all his affairs arranged before he returns, which he will probably not do until within a short time of his marriage. We must set about ordering the trousseaux before the girls leave us."

"An arduous undertaking!" said the visitor with a smile; "but you must have considerable experience by this time."

Not long before the departure of Beatrice and Helen from Edinburgh, they received intelligence of an approaching event which filled them with the liveliest joy. This was no other than the intended return home of their beloved Aunt Helen, which she wrote to announce to the family at Sempilltower. It was

however, only to be a temporary one. Pressing business required her husband's presence in London ; besides which, he had of late begun to feel his health suffering from the warm climate, and was glad of the opportunity of making a change. He expected to be at home for half a year, perhaps longer ; and although he could not be for any length of time absent from London himself, he meant to leave his wife at Sempilltower, having no house in town, and knowing how much she would prefer it. The latter was a saving clause of Helen's own devising. She very well knew that to George, —no whit altered from the George of old,—her preferences either way were matter of supreme indifference ; but this arrangement was the one which best suited him ; and their arrival in England, whence they meant to proceed straight home, was announced as likely to take place early in the month of June.

CHAPTER XIII.

“The Kirk was decked at morning tide,
The tapers glimmered fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride
And dame and knight are there.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

“The maid that lovely form surveyed;
Wistful she gazed, and knew her not,
But nature to her heart conveyed
A sudden thrill, a startling thought,
A feeling many a year forgot,
Now like a dream anew recurring,
As if again, in every vein,
Her mother’s milk was stirring.”

SOUTHEY.

It was a glorious morning in the most beautiful of seasons, the beginning of “the leafy month of June;” and the far-stretching woods, bright green meadows, and bowery lanes, surrounding the ancient village church of

Milldenhanger, were in the very perfection of their early summer beauty; whilst the profusion of lovely wild flowers, in every variety of scent and hue, enamelling the ground, or twining among the hedge-rows, bore no traces of the spoiler's hands, which from day-break had been engaged in thinning their numbers. It was scarcely possible to tell whence the village children had procured the profusion of blossoms which they had wreathed into garlands of every conceivable form, suspended wherever a garland could find room. Since day-break too, the church bells had been ringing,—the band, in new liveries, parading the street,—and all the busy note of preparation which betokens a coming festival in full progress. The bustle continued to deepen and intensify as the hour for the solemnity approached; until at last the long, long, brilliant train of equipages was seen approaching by the winding road from the Great House, and drawing up at the church-yard gate. Loud and long continued were the acclamations that rent the air, as, preceded by the troop of white-frocked children strewing flowers before her, the beautiful bride, leaning on her father's arm, advanced up the path-way—and disappeared, like a vision

of something more than mortal, beneath the dark Norman arch of the church door. And when, attended by her band of eight high-born bridesmaids, amongst whom the beauty of Emily Bertram shone conspicuous, she stood before the altar in the ancient chancel, surrounded by the stately tombs of her forefathers,—from the cross-legged effigy of Sir Joscelyn de la Mont-Joie, who died in harness on the field of Acre, down to the monumental marble which recorded the no less glorious death of Rupert Adair, Viscount Mountjoye, on Marston Moor ;—and the more ornate, but less picturesque, memorials of his descendants,—the land might have been challenged throughout its length and breadth to produce a couple more worthy of the scene than herself and her bridegroom. Many were the admiring eyes, the almost envying glances, bent upon them from the gay throng which crowded the church, and the humbler spectators beyond ; but there was one eye alone amongst them all which penetrated beneath the brilliant outward show. One keen observer alone noticed the deathly paleness which overspread the countenance,—not of the bride, but of the bridegroom,—the contraction of his noble features, as if from

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some sharp and sudden pain, at the utterance of the solemn words — I, Arthur, take thee, Mary Adeline, to be my wedded wife —,” and the trembling, controlled by the utmost effort alone, which threatened to shake him from head to foot, as he placed the ring upon the exquisite hand extended to him. Mr. Ingram said nothing on the subject of his observations, even to Lady Lucy Greville; but they did not the less indelibly remain in his memory. The service, meanwhile, proceeded, and came to a conclusion,—the words of blessing were pronounced,—the salute exchanged, the names signed in the vestry; and surrounded by happy faces and gratulating smiles, Mary Adeline Adair and Arthur Bertram left the church as man and wife, united —“for better, for worse,—till death them do part.”

This day was celebrated by many rejoicings at Kingsconnell, as became the wedding of the heir; and the hearts of the very poorest on the estate were made sharers in the general gladness. About a week before the marriage Mr. Carmichael had received a letter from Arthur Bertram, enclosing a munificent order on the bank, and containing a few lines,

written, as it appeared to his correspondent, in any thing but the overflowing spirits of a bridegroom, requesting him to apply this offering at his own discretion in assisting the poor of his parish; and to desire the recipients to consider it, not as connected with the writer, but as a tribute to the memory of him who would one day have been their master had he lived, and who would have better fulfilled the duties of that position than ever his successor could hope to do. It was understood that each of the clergymen in the other parishes which numbered Sir Thomas Bertram amongst their heritors, had received a donation from the same quarter, on a similar scale of liberality.

In spite of all the changes which had taken place, Miss Grace Lockhart could not refrain, on this day, from directing an occasional anxious glance at the countenance of her eldest niece; Beatrice and Helen having only a few days before arrived at the Grange, under the escort of their uncle, who promised to return for the double wedding in August. But the eye of the affectionate, though misjudging spinster was unable to detect any expression of emotion beyond what ought to

have been there; and she felt emboldened by this satisfaction to her own mind, to forgive herself more fully than she had ever been able to do since the news of Arthur's intended marriage reached her, for her own share in the trials which Beatrice had undergone.

The latter, meanwhile, had her own store of sad thoughts and retrospections on this festive day. She had otherwise been more than woman; but none of them, she thankfully felt, were such as could be deemed unfitting her own or Arthur's altered circumstances. All reminiscences of him as he had once been to her she had long been sedulous to banish; and it was in perfect purity of feeling, though with tears which would not be repressed, that kneeling in prayer that night, she poured forth a long and earnest supplication for blessings, temporal and eternal, for grace and guidance, on his behalf and that of the partner of his future lot; and mingled with them a fervent prayer that her own feet might be led aright on the new path which she herself was about to enter.

Late on that evening, the sisters had received a note from Mrs. Sempill, requesting that they would both come up to breakfast

next day at Sempilltower; and this engagement called them forth in all the glory and freshness of the beautiful summer morning, to traverse the woodland paths with hearts full of glad anticipation; for any day might now bring Mr. and Mrs. George Sempill, and they hoped to hear of the receipt of some letter announcing their approach. Arrived at the house,—they met Captain Sempill at the foot of the turret stair-case.

“Good morning, fair ladies!” he gaily exclaimed. “You deserve great credit for your punctuality. Now what reward do you think you are going to have for this early rising?”

“Something very fine, I am sure, by your looks, Captain Sempill,” said Beatrice.

“Well, well, go in and see. I wonder what reminds me just now, Beatrice, of a certain morning, long, long ago, when you rose very early to come over here. Do you recollect it?”

“You have news from Aunt Helen, Captain Sempill!” exclaimed Beatrice. “I know you have, I read it in your eyes. Tell us — pray tel us!”

“I didn’t know my eyes had possessed such powers of expression,” said he laughing.

“Well, run up to the drawing-room, and you’ll hear the news there. Come, Helen, Helen, you shan’t pass toll-free, you little witch. Give your old uncle a kiss for the good tidings.”

“A dozen, uncle Reginald,” said Helen, flinging her arms round his neck, “though you have told us none after all.”

“You forget that my eyes have, you monkey. There,—fly away after Beatrice.”

Helen required no second bidding. She ran lightly up the turret stairs after her sister, who was a few paces in advance of her. Beatrice opened the drawing-room door. There was only one person within, a lady, who turning from the window which commanded the court-yard, advanced a step, and extended her arms. For a single instant Beatrice stood motionless,—unable to utter a sound,—a strange thrill running through her heart and frame; then with a cry of ecstasy, she sprang forward, and Helen just then entering the room, both sisters were in another moment clasped in the arms of their aunt,—sobbing, smiling,—speechless, from the very excess of emotion.

Mr. and Mrs. George Sempill had arrived

the previous night, a day before the letter which should have heralded their approach; and this delightful surprise had incontinently been concerted for the two girls, between Captain Sempill and his mother, who had solemnly sworn to secrecy on the subject, the messenger who carried the invitation to breakfast. A happier party than that which partook of the meal together on the present occasion could scarcely be conceived. The good old Laird and Lady looked as if they had taken a new lease of life; Aunt Penny's benevolent face was like an April day of blended rain and sunshine; Captain Sempill's spirits were absolutely extravagant; and even George, still the erect, stately George of former days, though looking now a much older man than his brother, was moved to a considerable manifestation of human feeling on finding himself once more beneath the ancient family-roof; and won by their lovely faces and attractive manners to display a tolerable amount of interest in his wife's nieces. But all the aggregate amount of felicity displayed at table that day fell far short of the Major's. The old gentleman was radiant, refulgent with delight. With his first love, Mrs. George, still a beau-

tiful woman, seated by him on the side at which it was still practicable to make him hear; and his second, the future Mrs. Walter, on the other, his happiness was complete; and found a mirror in the beaming face of David Bryce; who, with his brethren in office, the Chalmerses, father and son, and Raigie Matheson, now a stout and strapping young man, reflected the joy which lighted up every countenance, and extended itself to every domestic in the house.

Swiftly, only too swiftly, flew away the succeeding weeks of that beautiful summer. Helen Sempill felt as if she could never make enough use of this brief re-union with her beloved nieces; never be enough with those creatures who were so soon again to pass away from her path of life. Helen she might hope to see often in after times; but Beatrice was about to quit them all—to be removed entirely from the scenes and friends of her girlhood. But her regrets, on this point, she forbore to utter to their object. Beatrice and she had an ample supply of topics for discussion. All the eventful history of the last ten years,—all the thousand details, present to the mind of the former as though they had occurred but

yesterday, of the last months of her mother's existence, all the succession of events which had influenced her own and Helen's inner life since then,—these afforded never-failing matter of discourse between them, as they slowly paced the turfen alleys of the old-fashioned garden at Sempilltower, or sat beneath its wide sweeping trees,—or wandered in the woods of the Grange, where every step recalled to Helen the voice and the angel face of her with whom her last earthly intercourse had there been held. The younger Helen was frequently, but not always, the companion of their walks, for whenever Walter discovered, as he constantly did, a pretext for coming out to Sempilltower, before the summer recess had legitimately released him, her company was of course claimed by him. Her sweet, happy, unselfish, and loving nature daily rendered her more dear to her aunt; but the latter felt, as her departed sister had said, that the interest inspired by Helen was untinged by the anxiety inseparable from a contemplation of the future lot of Beatrice. Helen was a creature made for sunshine,—prosperous love and calm domestic joys; such as a merciful Providence appeared to have appointed for her;

but the loftier and deeper heart of Beatrice, her greater amount of gifts, and consequently greater liability to error and temptation, rendered it impossible, in the usual course of God's dealings with his creatures, to anticipate an unclouded path for her. There appeared to Helen Sempill a strange and striking resemblance, which often recalled to her mind the unconscious prophecy of her sister,—between her own early history and that of Beatrice, as there undoubtedly was, in many respects, between their characters; and none knew better than she did, by how long and severe a process the proud heart and rebellious will are bent and trained to submission. None could so well have told as she could have done, the agony of the struggle, when one by one, the hand of the All-wise Iconoclast breaks or removes our idols. Her own struggle for submission was not yet over. It was often, even daily, renewed, as she obtained a deeper insight into the nature of the disadvantages which had surrounded her nieces,—and their fatal consequences to the happiness of Beatrice and reflected how differently she would, had she been permitted, have ordered matters for her. Now it was all too late. The die was

cast; and she had nothing for it—oh! the depths of unbelief, betrayed in that common phrase!—nothing for it,—but the one only thing that any of us can infallibly do well for each other,—to commit the object of such anxious affection in humble and earnest prayer to God.

Meanwhile, the warm maternal sympathy, and the wise and womanly counsels of her aunt, were of incalculable benefit to Beatrice. Their soothing influence extended far over the future of her days. By imperceptible degrees, they opened up new views of life, its duties, and its responsibilities, before her eyes,—led her to reflect more seriously, and pray more earnestly, over the new task she was undertaking, to expect less, and to be more resigned to the prospect of those disappointments which must infallibly occur to all. But still, as week after week of the numbered days glided on, as the period approached which was to place a gulph for her, between her past and her future life, it were vain to attempt describing how her profoundly sensitive heart clung, day by day more tenaciously, to all which she was so soon to quit,—to every inanimate object connected with her bye-gone existence, to

every human being with whom she had lived in contact; but beyond and above all, to her lovely and loving sister. It frequently appeared to her that if she could have pictured to herself what the pangs of separation would be, she never could have had courage to agree to the marriage which involved them. The least agreeable of all with whom her life had passed, from her Aunt Willie down to Miss Menie Mark herself, shone in softened colours as the hour of leaving them approached;—what then was the pain of anticipating the time when she should no more see Mr. Carmichael,—the kind-hearted family of Sempill-tower,—or her poor Aunt Grace, who had loved her so well, if not so wisely? What was the anguish of looking forward to a new parting with her aunt Helen, so long before the time when that must otherwise have taken place,—what the bitter grief of leaving Walter and Helen? But these regrets were now too late, though that consideration did not diminish their acuteness.

All things, the while, hurried rapidly on towards the conclusion. Captain Lockhart had announced his intention of arriving at the Grange about a week before the wedding; and

to the intense relief of all concerned, himself not excepted, his lady, who had at first threatened to accompany him, now altered her mind, on plea of delicate health, and decided to remain at home. Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart Clephane were also expected at their mother's house; and there too Mr. Sumner was to take up his abode when he came to Scotland, which he intended to do a fortnight before the period fixed for the marriage. Minor arrangements too came under discussion, and were amicably settled. Miss Violet Alexander, whose keen satisfaction with both matches, and full forgiveness of Beatrice's past misdemeanours, displayed themselves in the number and value of the presents which she bestowed upon the brides, had made a point of the double wedding taking place in Church, as those of their mother and aunt had done; and to this no one, save Miss Willie, ventured any objection. It was farther arranged, therefore, that the whole wedding party should afterwards repair to her house, there to partake of a *déjeuner* after the ceremony. Thence both couples were to set off, without returning to the Grange,—at which house a grand dinner party would take place that same evening. Beatrice and her sister expected to meet in London, previous to

her departure for Italy with her husband ; but her parting from home was to be final. Mr. Sumner and she, after visiting the Cumberland lakes, had arranged to go straight on to the house of his elder brother, in ——shire, and then to reside with his mother, at her villa at Twickenham, until the time arrived for them to quit England. The day which made Beatrice a bride, was to terminate her connection with the scenes and the friends of her youth.

One of the latter she had seen but seldom since her return from Edinburgh. Mr. Carmichael had as much as he could, without attracting observation, avoided meeting her ; or when they did encounter each other at Sempilltower, shunned any approach to particular conversation ; and this, in the joyous bustle which pervaded that establishment, he found it no difficult matter to do. But while she regretted this deeply, and felt a blank in the absence of their old familiar intercourse, Beatrice attributed the change to his recollection of former circumstances of her life, and his dread of awakening painful memories in her ; and there was no one else at all more clear-sighted, save Mrs. George Sempill. She with a woman's intuition in such matters, had suspicions on

the subject ; but these she religiously kept to herself, respecting the secret of another, so honourably concealed, and of which she had by accident alone obtained possession.

It was the night before the Lockhart Clephanes and Edward Sumner were expected at the Grange ; her last, as Beatrice felt it, of unrestricted freedom ; and with whatever real gladness she looked forward to her lover's coming, nature's less loving and less imaginative than her's, well know the pang attendant on that word,—the last. She and Helen had spent the day at Sempilltower, and tempted by the splendour of a moonlight nearly as warm as "sunlight sheathed," they had walked home through the woods, escorted by Captain Sempill, Walter, and their Aunt Helen, who would not be left behind. A happy party they had been ; and long had they lingered in pleasant talk upon the terrace, where they were joined by Miss Grace ; who, the old lady and Miss Willie having gone to bed, was sitting up for her nieces over "Melmoth the Wanderer." Beatrice and Helen, when they had finally bid adieu to their friends, remained for a considerable time in the parlour with her, talking over the day's proceedings.

Then she and Helen retired to their rooms; but Beatrice, promising very soon to follow her sister, turned off at the bottom of the stair, and proceeded alone to the old school-room. She experienced an irresistible longing to be for a little while by herself. This night was the last of many things,—the last of the old Grange days. With the following one, would begin the “company life” of that primitive abode; a different and an unusual phase in its existence. The present closed for ever, so far as Beatrice and Helen were concerned, its every-day parlour, and its homely fashions; and even these, repulsive as they had always been, now appeared invested with the magic halo of association, and could not be seen to terminate without pain. Beatrice closed the school-room door,—set down her candle,—and walking to the window, unbarred the shutters, and looked out into the moonlit garden. There she remained for a long, long while, wave after wave of thought and memory rolling over her passive spirit. Her feelings had that day been keenly touched by the receipt of a present from Miss Margaret Bertram, a splendidly-bound Bible and Prayer-book, accompanied by a few lines, written by the ex-

cellent old lady, to whom Beatrice and Helen had been constant and ever-welcome visitors during their residence in Edinburgh. They contained a solemn and affectionate farewell, and prayed for a blessing upon her future course; and she had read them with many tears. The parcel had been left in the school-room, which had become the repository of many articles of a similar nature, as they had arrived for both the sisters; and Beatrice, rousing herself at last from her trance of meditation, approached the table for the purpose of looking again at its contents, and at their duplicates addressed to Helen. As she did so, her eye was caught by a large unopened package of books, which appeared to have been brought in when she was out. Upon it lay a note, in the well-known hand-writing of Mr. Carmichael. She hastily opened and read it. It was a short one, requesting her acceptance of the works of an author who had, the writer knew, long been a favourite of her's, and who had afforded them both matter for many a discussion which he never could forget, in days now gone by for ever. He trusted that their perusal might sometimes recall to her memory a friend who in all probability might never see her again; but who would cease to remember

her only with life itself, and whose most fervent prayers would daily and nightly arise on her behalf to the Throne of the Almighty. He could have wished, he said, to have taken leave of her in person, but he was called from home by business, which would detain him until after her departure, and, perhaps, for the sake of his own fortitude, it was as well to avoid the trial. He could only, in conclusion, pray that every blessing might attend her; and that, if no more on this side the grave, yet on the other, they might be permitted to meet and to renew their friendship, where there was neither change nor decay, and where the word he was now compelled with such pain to write, would be a sound unknown — Farewell!

With a trembling hand Beatrice untied the parcel. It contained the entire works, prose and poetry, of Coleridge; and on the first volume was inscribed—

“BEATRICE LOCKHART,

WITH THE MOST FERVENT GOOD WISHES OF
HER FRIEND, JOHN CARMICHAEL.
1ST THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER II., VERSE 8.”

She took up the Bible that lay beside her,—looked for the text referred to,—re-read the note, and burst into an agony of tears.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ If you were civil, and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so.”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

“ So sehen wiz uns wieder !”

SCHILLER.

THE latter end of a lovely month of October found Edward and Beatrice Sumner in Rome, where they had resolved to spend a couple of months, ere proceeding to their future residence at Genoa. They had crossed direct from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, so that Beatrice's first introduction to the land which was destined to be her home, took place at the mighty feet of the “lone mother of dead empires ;” and all the poetry and enthusiasm of her soul seemed to expand into new life under the inspiring influences which now surrounded her. Much of these she found it necessary to keep to herself, and seek a safety-

valve in her letters to Helen and to Mrs. George Sempill; for her husband, like many persons of a calm and passionless temperament, had rather a dread of enthusiasm, as Beatrice had not failed to discover, even before their marriage; but he was pleased to see her enjoy herself so thoroughly, and unaffectedly anxious in every way to promote her enjoyment; and without feeling the poetry of Rome, he had sufficient talent and intelligence, combined with previous knowledge of the localities, to be an excellent cicerone.

It so happened, when about half their time had elapsed, that on a certain evening of moonlight, such as is undreamed of in a northern climate, and of remarkable warmth and mildness, for the season, a party had been formed amongst some English friends of Mr. Sumner's for visiting the Colosseum; and an invitation to join them had been accepted for himself and his wife, to the delight of the latter, who had as yet only seen that glorious monument of antiquity under the eye of day. But Beatrice, when the hour arrived, found herself compelled to proceed to the place of rendezvous without her husband, whom a violent headache forced to remain at home, although he would not hear of her breaking her engagement on his account.

The party she accompanied consisted of several persons ; and on arriving within the area of the Colosseum, they soon discovered that they were not its only visitors. More than one group of strangers, with their guides, appeared to be engaged in the same pursuit ; and in the midst of her intense enjoyment of the hour and the scene, Beatrice could not quite help a longing wish that she could have escaped so many voices,—so much talking,—and have sought this time-hallowed spot alone, or in company with some one congenial spirit, with whom to enjoy it in comparative silence.

She was making the round of the galleries along with her party, and the gentleman who escorted her having been suddenly called back by one of the other ladies to adjust some trifling difficulty, which occasioned a little delay, Beatrice, unsuspecting of danger, walked on in advance, and paused at last, just where a full flood of glorious moonlight poured in through one of the broken arches. She was standing, absorbed in a dream of the past, and only conscious that the sound of voices was drawing near her, but not listening to them, taking it for granted they were those of the friends who were following her ; till she was

suddenly and disagreeably startled by a burst of loud, reckless laughter, and beheld a party of four or five gentlemen, who came rushing tumultuously towards where she was, from the opposite direction to that whence she had come. English they evidently were, by their voices; and as evidently excited, to use the mildest term, by wine. Beatrice had been long enough in Rome to know something of the scandal which her countrymen abroad too often bring, by their conduct, upon the very name of their nation; apparently conceiving themselves emancipated, by the fact of being on the Continent, from the restraints which decency would impose upon them at home. She was angry with herself for her imprudence, and turning round, attempted to steal back to join her party under cover of the deep shadows of the walls; but a shout from one of the gentlemen at that instant proclaimed that she was seen; and in another she was surrounded. It was a most unpleasant situation; for it was manifest that not one of the party was sufficiently in his senses to heed any appeal to his feelings of propriety; and terrified for the consequences of a collision between them and the male friends who must even now be looking for her, Beatrice

drew down her veil, and in a low voice requested leave to pass. The only answer she received was a burst of insolent laughter; and from behind the group another gentleman at that moment advancing,—with an exclamation of “What have we here?” approached and attempted to pass his arm round her waist. The voice, the form, sent a thrill of grief, of shame, of anguish—to the very heart of Beatrice, and with the impulse of uncontrollable emotion, she flung back her veil, the moonlight pouring full upon her countenance.

“*Arthur!*” she uttered in a low and trembling voice. “Oh! is it thus we meet?”

The person she addressed, dropping his outstretched arm, staggered backwards as if he had been shot, and would have fallen to the ground, but for the support of the wall, against which he remained leaning, his hands clasped over his eyes. His companions, in alarm and confusion, crowded round him; while Beatrice, scarce conscious of what she had said, her heart throbbing as if it would burst, and her brain whirling round, fled back to her party, whom she met approaching in search of her; for this scene, which has taken so many words to narrate, was the transaction of a very

few minutes only. Her utmost self-command was barely sufficient to enable her to control the hysterical emotion which threatened to suffocate her, and to avoid betraying the shock she had received ; but it was a matter of too imperative necessity not to be done, at whatever cost ; and she only attributed the nervous trembling which she could not hide, to her dread of having, through her own inadvertence, mistaken her way, and missed her friends. They passed, as they proceeded, the group of discomfitted revellers, who were standing, in all the trouble and perplexity of half-sobered thought, around their apparently unconscious companion.

“What the deuce is to do now ?” whispered one.

“There’s been some infernal mistake. All your fault, Wyndham,” replied another.

“Mine? I like that! But what shall we do with him ?”

“How are you, Bertram ?” said the youngest and least intoxicated of the party, bending over him. “Will you take my arm, and we’ll get out of this place as fast as we can.”

He repeated his question twice ere he obtained any answer. At last Arthur Bertram,

withdrawing his hands, and looking around with a bewildered air, disclosed a countenance so ghastly pale, and stamped with such an expression of agony, as terrified the youth beside him.

"I am afraid you are very ill, Bertram," said he. "Do you think you can get on with my arm, or shall I——?"

"No,—I am quite well, thank you, Fane," he replied, struggling to recollect himself; "it is nothing at all." He accepted the arm held out to him, and the party moved on, in a somewhat subdued mood.

Beatrice Sumner never mentioned this encounter to any human being,—not even to her sister. It was an incident too bitterly fraught with the most painful of sensations, disappointment in one whom we have fondly and admiringly loved,—to be recalled with any emotion but horror, or spoken of, save in her prayers. Nor did she ever again see Arthur, during the remainder of her stay in Rome. One day, when she was driving out along with the English friends already mentioned, they met a party on horseback, consisting of three ladies, evidently their countrywomen, attended by several gentlemen. One of the ladies, as she

passed the carriage, turned the loveliest face imaginable upon them; and Beatrice felt a strange painful thrill of recognition dart through her, ere she heard what one of her companions said.

“That is the beautiful bride, the Hon. Mrs. Bertram. A great heiress. She was—etc.” Here followed a chapter from the Peerage, *à la mode Anglaise*. “They are spending the winter here, and she is turning the heads of all the men in Rome.”

“And where is her husband all the time?” asked another of the party.

“Why, he is doing the same good office for the women. He is a regular lady-killer, they say.”

“A very dissipated young man;” added a third speaker.

“May be so,” said the first; “but he has not been fortunate in his choice. She is a beautiful creature, the very thing to have for a mistress,—to follow, and worship, and so forth; but not the stuff to make a wife of, take my word for it.”

Every word of this conversation gave an additional pang to Beatrice; and more than once afterwards she was the auditress of similar

sentiments expressed with regard to her former lover, and the fate which he had brought upon himself. But neither he nor his bride crossed her path again; and her removal from Rome was shortly followed by immersion in a new state of existence, which will best be described in her own words.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF BEATRICE
TO HER SISTER.

*Casa V——, Strada Nuova,
Genoa.*

I wish, my Helen, I could give you some idea of the picturesque beauty of this quaint city—"Genoa la Superba,"—rising from its lovely bay; which is in itself—oh! so beautiful! sparkling in the sunlight, and covered with its tiny skiffs, whose graceful lateen sails give them the appearance of large white birds floating lightly on the water. It is scarcely possible to convey in words any conception of the picturesque effect of the town, as you first behold it from the bay, crowding round the moles and jetties of the harbour, with its forest of masts; then ascending the heights, varied by its graceful hanging gardens, its spires and

belfries, till far up the dark green hill above, the outer walls and watch-towers terminate the view. And within the town, there are such strange, lofty, narrow streets!—so narrow some of them, and so steep, as to remind one of the *wynds* in the old town of Edinburgh;—places where nothing larger than a sedan-chair or a donkey can get along. Others, such as this one,—Strada Balbi, etc., are much wider; and paved,—not causewayed like our's. These contain the palaces of the ancient Genoese nobility; with their wide gateways, leading into white marble courts, on which the magnificent staircases open, and from which the hanging gardens are entered. Some of these are still in exquisite order, and inhabited by the descendants of the old merchant princes; others are wofully dilapidated, and let, in suites of apartments, to different tenants. Such is the case with Casa V——, our residence; though it is much less desolate and neglected than many others; the court-yard is clean, and the marble pavement free from weeds, though the statues which surround it are some of them broken; and the frescoes on the walls much effaced. The garden, too, which opens from the court, is in tolerable order; and reminds

me strangely, Helen, of a place which I often see in my dreams, the Pleasance at Kingsconnell! It is of course upon a much smaller scale; but it is laid out in terraces with stone balustrades, and interspersed with fountains and statues, here and there, amongst the graceful shrubs. I look forward to many a pleasant hour in that garden; it seems to me, in this strange land, to wear the aspect of an old friend.

I must try, now, to give you some idea how we are lodged within doors. It seems strange to us at first, not to have a house all to ourselves; but such a thing is almost unknown in Italy. Our suite of apartments is on the second story of the building; you go up the great, wide, massive stair-case, and on the second bare, spacious landing-place you come to a door at which a cord is suspended, which rings a bell within a large ante-room. This is perfectly empty of furniture, with the exception of some strange old chairs, and one or two tables against the wall, with quaint carved oak legs, and slabs of coloured marble; and from this ante-room the others all open, one after another. First come a large and a small drawing-room; then a dining-room en-

tered on one side from the latter; on the other side is our bed-room; beyond which is Edward's dressing-room; and beyond it again several other bed-rooms, which also open upon a bare, cold back passage. The kitchen and servants' apartments are reached by a back stair-case, which has a door opening upon the dining-room. The furniture of the rooms is of a mixed nature, partly Italian, and partly English; for Edward had sent out orders to have them new papered, and provided with all manner of national comforts, including such a sweet toned pianoforte! But at the same time he has retained, to my great satisfaction, some old straight-backed sofas, and chairs with gilt legs, covered with rich blue satin damask, at which I look with profound respect, being sure that they could tell many a tale of other times, if they had the power of speech; and some other articles of a singular foreign fashion. No pains have been spared to render my accommodation all I could wish to have it. You would be satisfied — even you, my Helen, if you could witness Edward's kindness to me! And now that I have unpacked and arranged all my dear books, my music, and the keepsakes, each of which has a memory of home

connected with it, every thing begins to look so home-like. If I could but welcome my beloved friends to my new dwelling,—if I could ever hope to see your sweet face, my darling, or dear aunt Helen's, beneath this roof,—if I could but expect to hear Walter's merry laugh, what a different feeling there would be connected with it! But this is my "bunch of myrrh." You remember Jeremy Taylor's glorious sermon on "the wedding-ring?" I only wish this myrrh could, like his, be but shown and taken away again! I am afraid it will be a more abiding momento for me.

All our new acquaintances are very kind to me, and there are some very agreeable people among them. One of the merchants here is a Scotchman, Mr. ———, a worthy man. And oh! my Helen! you must have lived long amongst strangers to be able to conceive the rapture with which I heard his broad west-country accent, the first time he called upon me!

It is a thing which I cannot help regretting, but over which I have no control, that I must

live in Italy without knowing any Italians. There is no class in this country which answers to that we occupy. The nobility look down from the heights of an unapproachable pride, upon all connected with trade; descended though they be from the mighty merchants of the old republic; and in Italy there is no middle class. I find, as I get to know more of our countrymen and their families here, that they are, so to speak, "plus Anglais qu' en Angleterre;" much more exclusively national than they would be at home. Mrs. Lockhart herself never looked with more profound contempt on every thing *Scutch*, than the excellent representatives of John Bull conceive it a duty they owe to their country, to look upon every thing Italian here. It often amuses, and often provokes me; though I say nothing on the subject, lest I should be regarded with suspicious eyes; as Edward tells me any one in our circle would be, who had much commerce with the natives. He says that he cannot much wonder at their prejudices, considering that the only natives in trade here are persons sprung from the lowest ranks, of mean and offensive habits; or else Jews; and that besides them the foreign merchants come in contact

with no Italians; save, in the way of business, with pettifogging lawyers,—people connected with the customs,—secondary artists,—or teachers. Thus they are compelled to associate entirely amongst themselves; and this certainly begets a narrowness and prejudice in their ideas.

All the habits of life here are strictly English. During the winter season it is the custom, as at home, to dine late; and dinner and tea-parties abound. There are also *soirées dansantes*,—very like home. I do not think you could possibly fancy yourself in Italy, if you were suddenly set down in the midst of one. * * * * *

But in the summer all classes in Italy dine early,—at two or three o'clock. It is not the custom on account of the heat, for any but the men who must attend their business, to go out in the day-time. In the evening everybody does, for the promenade, on foot or in a carriage, as the case may be; and in the English houses this is followed, on coming home, by a substantial tea, spread like a regular meal, with a table-cloth, in the dining-room or back drawing-room.

“There is a degree of incongruity in all

this which sometimes offends my fancy. I could well have dispensed with some of the imported comforts and *snugnesses* of English life, in favour of a few more of the picturesque inconveniences of Italian. If I had had my own will, it would have led me to adopt more of the habits of the country; to assimilate myself more with its people and its ways; in short, to do, and not to do, a great many things which would fill my new acquaintances with consternation, if I were to promulgate such heretical feelings. But I carefully keep them concealed; and only solace myself by expressing them to you, my Helen. I should not even have chosen my furniture to be so thoroughly English. The bright new chintzes, the papers on the walls, strike me as out of keeping with the style of the apartments. I cannot contravene Edward's assertion, that they are at least clean, and in perfect order, whereas the silk, velvet, and damask curtains and hangings which they have replaced were faded, soiled, and worn. Still I cannot help feeling that those must have been more in character with the mansion; and I look upon the articles which have usurped their places with much the same sensations that I feel, in

contrasting our dresses and bonnets with the graceful Messeri of the beautiful Genoese women; or in comparing the round-faced, comfortable, well-clad Englishmen about us, with the dark, vivid, eagle-eyed,—often untidy, but never vulgar or common-looking, Italians.

One thing greatly pleases me; that our servants are natives, with the exception of the German maid whom I engaged in Paris, when my English soubrette discovered that she could not possibly condemn herself to go into banishment. This German *mädchen* is a particularly nice, steady person. There is something that attracts me much in the manners of the Italian servants; a respectful kindness, not unlike that of the household at Sempilltower; and reminding one of old days, when the tie between master and servant was not a mere mercenary bond. I especially delight in one beautiful custom. At the striking of the *Ventiquattro*,—the last hour of the day,—(“the gloaming” hour, as we should call it in dear old Scotland, but there is no gloaming here!)—Edward’s man, Antonio, brings lights into the sitting-room; and as he places them

on the table, wishes us "felice sera." "I like the greeting!" don't you, Helen?

One great evil in our situation here I trust may ere long be remedied. We English have at present no regular clergyman; and just now, no Church Service at all; the last clergyman who happened to be here as a chance visitor, and did duty whilst he remained, having gone to Nice for the winter before we came. The English merchants in Genoa have, however, resolved to bestir themselves, and arrange matters so as to have a permanent chaplain amongst them; and it will be an unspeakable blessing if they do. In the meantime, deprived as we are of the ordinances of religion, how often do I look back, my Helen, to the sins of my youth,—to my neglect of the blessed privileges of the Church, while yet they were within my reach! What would I not give now, for one of the many slighted Sundays when I might have enjoyed them, and when I suffered an unworthy motive to deter me from doing so! How often do Mr. Malcolm's words of holy counsel, and his fatherly affection, return upon my memory to

reproach me, now that I can profit by them no longer !

I pass many hours alone, of course, during Edward's absence through the day. Perhaps I do not altogether regret this, for you know, darling, I never did mind about being left to my own devices ; and although I like many of my new female friends here, I have not met with any one with whom I could enjoy confidential intercourse. I prefer solitude to the constraint of uncongenial society ; and I practise diligently, and read, and write these long letters ; and dream, Helen,—many and many a dream of the past. Especially on the days when the foreign mails have come in, and when I have your or Aunt Helen's long dear letters to transport me back to the scenes of my youth,—how vividly I sometimes seem to behold them all again ! I am with you in the old school-room ; all our little pursuits going on together, as in the days long gone by, when, amongst our books and our music, and our bright visions, we could shut out lectures and cross looks, and forget them all ; when we had at least the blessing of never-failing sympathy in each other, to soften every trial. Or

I am reading with Mr. Carmichael; enjoying the luxury of looking up to the mind of a man,—so infinitely larger and more powerful than my own,—and yet a mind of the same character with my own, and one which understood and shared in my favourite pursuits and trains of thought. Or my fancy carries me back to those happy, happy, peaceful evenings at Kingsconnell, when Miss Margaret, and dear, dear William, and Mr. Carmichael, used to sit round the fire, conversing, and I listened, and you and Emily sang or read together; and at night, in our own room, we talked over all the events of the day. I start from these reveries at times with such a sense of loneliness! Do not dream that I am unhappy, dearest; very far from it. But it is not easy, when one has had the blessing of perfect sympathy in a sister, to live without it; and to be unable to say to any one,—“do you remember!”

CHAPTER XV.

“Mournest thou, poor soul ! and wouldest thou yet
Call back the things which shall not, cannot be ?
Heaven must be won, not dreamed ; thy task is set,
Peace was not made for earth, nor rest for thee.”

LYRA APOSTOLICA.

THE preceding letters, written in the early days of our heroine's residence at Genoa, detailed the truth ; but yet not all the truth, of her position. Beatrice could not with reason have alleged herself to be unhappy in her married life ; but it did beyond question involve some trials which she kindly and wisely kept to herself ; and it was only from the saddened and subdued tone which, in spite of herself, pervaded her letters, especially to her aunt, that the latter, guided by her own early experience, was led to suspect much more than she felt it necessary to suggest to Helen, whose own mar-

ried state was one of sunshine, nearly as perfect as is consistent with the chequered lot of humanity. Mr. Sumner's sympathy with his wife, in fact, was a very imperfect one to begin with, and the influences of his own family had not tended to increase it. It was their characteristic, by a species of collective egotism, not only to love and admire each other to a very high degree, but to consider their family dispositions, abilities, pursuits, and habits, as forming an infallible code of laws, a standard, any deviation from which in others was extremely apt to offend them. Mrs. Sumner was a really clever woman, of strong sense, and upright principles, who being early left a widow, had brought up her family very judiciously; and her daughters, all of whom were married, save the youngest, a year or two Edward's junior, were likewise clever, sensible, and accomplished. A strong family likeness pervaded them all; and all were distinguished by one peculiarity, an almost total deficiency in the imaginative faculty, that sweet and softening influence in character, which enables the possessor to enter into all varieties of mind in others, and make allowance for differences; and which imparts withal, a largeness and freedom from prejudice

such as nothing else can bestow. Hence it followed, not only that all their pursuits partook of the matter-of-fact and practical,—that their reading was historical and scientific,—and nothing more,—their music equally scientific,—and their whole turn of mind, and habits of thought, bearing reference, in the language of Transcendental philosophy, to the dominion of the understanding, as opposed to that of the pure reason,—but that they devoutly believed that any other mode of exercising the faculties than theirs was foolish, wrong, or dangerous ; and had no toleration, even for perfection, of any other species than their own.

Edward Sumner, until he removed to Italy, had lived much with his own family ; and as all of them, besides having the unbounded faith in each other's merits, to which we have alluded, were blessed with calm and equable tempers, the union amongst them was a strong and unbroken one. But even this admirable feature of their lives and characters lost some of its charm, in consequence of the same one-sidedness and defective Catholicity of feeling which ran through all they did. Edward himself was fondly attached to Beatrice ; but although kind and polite in manner, as it was

his nature to be, towards all the members of her family, he could not take them into his heart, nor did he feel it his duty to do so; and in the midst of his love and admiration of the object of his choice, he was at times disturbed by misgivings as to his mother's and sisters' approval of some things in her,—her fancy and imagination, her love of poetry and fiction, beyond all. In these respects, poor Miss Grace Lockhart, born with the best possible intentions to be one of her niece's worst enemies, was of signal disservice to her, during the period of Edward's stay at the Grange. Fancying to enhance her attractions with him, as a similar proceeding would have done with Arthur Bertram or Mr. Carmichal, she was at pains to search out and produce to him a quantity of manuscripts written by Beatrice, of many and various descriptions, such as all young persons of talent have more or less perpetrated in the course of their lives; translations in verse and prose, from the Italian and the German, and a considerable mass of original poetry, of no common merit; some of it indeed of a very high order; but none of which Beatrice herself would have dreamt of displaying to any one. These things, however, were

new and startling to Edward, novelties in his experience of women; and what he instinctively felt would find no favour in the eyes of those who were his models of perfection; and not less startling to him was a great deal of what Miss Grace Lockhart, in her simplicity, related as the highest praise of her niece that she could utter. There was much in Edward even previous to their wedding, that with all Beatrice's genuine humility, and all her generous candour of spirit, pained, chilled, and drove her heart back upon itself; all the more so because there was nothing actually tangible in what she felt to have these effects; no wilful unkindness,—only a deficiency in sympathy, and in the power, as Coleridge hath it, of projecting his own being into that of another. And it was not the least painful part of the whole that she felt it her bounden duty to conceal these trials from every one. They formed a portion of the lot which she herself had chosen, and she had no right to complain of them, or to damp the pleasure with which those who loved her looked forward to her married life. The time which she spent with her husband's family after her marriage, only seemed to bring out more prominently all those

features of discrepancy. None of them meant to be, nor were they, unkind to her; but it was impossible for her to avoid feeling that she was not one of themselves, that they had nothing in common, and that they looked down upon her as deficient in many of the acquirements upon which they set most store;—perhaps still more as abounding in those which they would rather have seen wanting in her. And Beatrice, with the imprudence and ultracandour which belonged to her natural character, assisted in placing herself in a wrong light with them; frankly acknowledging, and regretting, as she did, her own limited acquaintance with the practical duties of life, and her dread lest Edward might find her defective in these respects. These deficiencies, which in point of fact were the result of her domestic situation alone, were by her new connections set down to her addiction to “the vain and unprofitable art of poem-making,” and other fond conceits; and it was matter of no small dismay to her to discover that she had been literally taken at her own valuation by them, and still worse, by her husband. The experiences of her married life, consequent upon this impression, indirectly if not deliberately fos-

tered in his mind at its commencement, were very trying to a disposition like her's,—all the more so because they involved a species of trial quite new to her. Hitherto, all those with whom Beatrice had come in contact, on whose good opinion she laid much stress,—all her few male friends in particular, had been persons who set the highest value upon talent and mental acquirement, and it was something to which she was totally unaccustomed, to find those very gifts regarded with suspicion and disparagement; and to discover that by a common, though most erroneous, mode of judging, it was a received opinion amongst her new friends that talent, at least of the imaginative order, was a perilous and undesirable endowment to a woman, as tending to unfit her for the useful purposes of existence. All this, which would have stirred up a harder and stronger character to indignant self assertion, only served to sink and depress her, and make her feel, at times, as if she could do nothing right.

It may well be conceived that these pains and perplexities did not terminate with Beatrice's residence at Twickenham; and that, cast as she was in a foreign land entirely upon

her husband for companionship and tenderness, there must many a time and oft have mingled a painful chill with all the essential kindness which he shewed her; a painful sense that their hearts did not beat in unison, that he did not and would not participate in most of her warmest feelings and tenderest reminiscences; and as little cared for that participation on her part in his family affections, which she had so longed and striven to feel. And his disparagement, often more implied than expressed, of the best efforts which she could make to accommodate herself to his ideas, was galling and irritating in no small degree to a heart so warm, and a temper naturally so impatient, as hers. All these things made part of her discipline of life,—the small trials which are so much less easy to endure than its large sorrows; those trials, which small as they are, bring home to the heart which rightly uses them, in process of time, a profound knowledge of what life must be to every disciple of the Crucified Saviour, a daily and hourly bearing of the Cross. And in process of time too, if accepted in a spirit of submission, they bring their own reward with them, a conscious growth in faith, humility,

and patience. But this is not the work of a short period. Often and often had Beatrice to deplore her own deficiency in all these; often did she look back with keen regret upon her old life of study and of dreams; with all its inevitable, but unprofitable seclusion from the duties and the littlenesses of daily life; as contrasted with the present one of repressed feelings, unparticipated thoughts, and earnest striving after excellence in uncongenial pursuits, without the meed of approbation which would have rendered all tasks light to her. It was a long while before she learned to acknowledge that with her natural craving after the love and praise of those around her, this lack of what she might justly have expected, was part of her needful discipline; as leading her to labour from higher motives, and for higher rewards than the applause of man. In process of time, also, she began to see that her present life had been necessary to correct the tendencies of her former one; and that a severe practical training was requisite for one who had lived so engrossed in visions as she had done. She learned, in fine, how far short an existence all coloured by one absorbing passion, and where feeling usurps the place of

action, falls of the great end for which existence was bestowed. And thus time glided on, and slowly and surely the trials which it brought fulfilled their appointed work.

Upon no part of her early life, as we have already seen, did Beatrice look back with so much remorse as upon her own neglect of the Church privileges which might have been her guide and solace so much more frequently than she permitted them to be; and upon the confusion of feeling, and low standard of faith and life resulting from this grand error. Now, when so far removed from the venerated pastor whose ministrations she had so often slighted, removed from any one who cared for her soul, and doomed sometimes to hear the services of the Church performed in a careless and perfunctory manner, sometimes, during the early part of her life at Genoa, not to hear them at all,—it seemed as if she only now fully aroused herself to their inestimable value. It was stronge how the words of Mr. Malcolm would return to her memory,—how much stronger his influence became in absence than it had been while she was near him; and how she remembered what she had often heard him say, of the privileges involved in belonging to

the Communion of the Church, visible and invisible. The private observance of her rules, calculated as they are to unite in one bond of unity all her members, however widely scattered over the earth, and to unite them not only with the living, but with the Faithful Departed, who still live without the pale of mortal sight,—now began to assume an aspect of new significancy and importance in her eyes ; and its fruits became visible in the calm, the holy order, and the new spirit of duty and self-sacrifice diffused throughout her life. Thus even the privation of the means of grace worked out a blessing in her case, as in the Providence of God, evil is so often over ruled to do.

Even on this highest of all subjects, Beatrice found her husband's sympathy an imperfect one. Edward Sumner was an orthodox Churchman of the old school, which eschewed nothing so carefully as "high flown" notions of any kind ; and he nourished, moreover, a profound suspicion of the orthodoxy of the sister Church in Scotland, such as was, and still is in a less degree, very common amongst a certain class of English Churchmen. This feeling prepared him to listen with somewhat of mistrust and uneasiness to any thing which

his wife could say on the subject. But Beatrice, fortunately for herself, was not addicted to argumentation; and all her higher and more ideal impressions on the subject of religion she carefully kept to herself; aiming at the discharge of duty more than the discussion of opinions.

Thus passed eight years of wedded life, not without the usual effect of assimilating much which at first was most dissimilar; bringing home the character of the wife, in some measure, to the comprehension of the husband; and teaching the wife more and more to bear with what was deficient in him, in consideration of the real attachment which, in his calm way, he shewed to her; causing her, in short, to learn the great lesson of Christian contentment with whatever measures may be meted out by the hand of God. Two children served as a bond of union between the parents; of whom the eldest, a lovely and engaging boy, was born in the second year after their marriage. His little sister was too years younger. It was perhaps an advantageous circumstance, considering the peculiar disposition of Edward Sumner, and the influence of his family, that Beatrice and he were so com-

pletely separated from their relations on both sides, and left untrammelled to feel their mutual dependence. For during all these years, they remained absent from their home and kindred. The only glimpses of the latter enjoyed by either consisted in a visit from the son of the elder Mr. Sumner, a fine youth on his travels; and one which Beatrice, to her inexpressible delight, received from her father, who, his domestic discomforts having again sent him afloat, happened to be in the Mediterranean, and anchored for a short time in the Gulf of Genoa. This brief re-union with him formed an era for his daughter's affectionate heart long to look back upon. Apart from his wife, enchanted to see his daughter in her own house, and to embrace his grand-children, and highly pleased with his son-in-law, Captain Lockhart was all his old happy tempered self again; and left behind him an indelible impression to efface, in the mind of Beatrice, the painful recollections which had so long haunted her of his altered spirits and temper when at the Grange.

Meanwhile her sister's letters kept Beatrice completely cognizant of all the changes which these passing years effected at home, as well as

of the small daily events, without a detail of which, the dearest of friends must inevitably become estranged in the course of a long separation. Helen herself was a happy wife, and the mother of three children; and Walter was fast rising into eminence at the Scottish bar. But all this time had not elapsed unmarked by some painful gaps taking place in the old familiar circle at home. The first of these occurred within a year after Beatrice's departure from Scotland; and occasioned acute distress to many. This was nothing less than the secession of Mr. Carmichael from the Scottish Kirk. Very shortly after the trial and deposition of Edward Irving for heretical opinions, by the Presbytery of Annan, his native place, the minister of Kingsconnell appeared before that of ———, avowed himself to entertain the same doctrines, and declared that having come to a profound conviction of the errors of the Kirk, he could no longer in conscience remain within its pale. He was accordingly deposed by that reverend body, to the profound sorrow of its most sincere and conscientious members. Helen described Mr. Carmichael's leave-taking of the Sempilltower family as most painfully affecting, and entered

into a lengthened detail of their distress in thus losing him ; of the grief which was felt by many of the parishioners, more especially by the poor, to whom he had been as a ministering angel, and of the malignant self-gratulation of others ; amongst whom it is needless to say, that her aunt Willie, Miss Menie Mark, and the redoubted Thammas Brodie, shone conspicuous. Unlike some of the many clergymen deposed for similar reasons at that time, Mr. Carmichael did not remain in the neighbourhood of his former flock. He quitted the country at once ; and after the death of Edward Irving, was understood to have repaired to the vicinity of London, to a place at that period famed as the head-quarters of the new sect. It was scarcely possible, Helen added, to describe the mournful alteration which the loss of him made in the parish. For her part, she never should be able to bear the sight of the new minister, though of course she must submit to it, as the Laird and Mrs. Sempill would make a point of showing him attention. But she was happy to say, she should never be obliged to go to the church again ; for the dear old people never had made any objection to her and Walter attending St.

Michael's, the latter having of course been educated a Churchman. And besides that she daily felt more and more what mischief arose from a confusion of Churches, the idea of going to that of Kingsconnell again, and not seeing Mr. Carmichael there, was not to be borne. Beatrice agreed in this most fully, and wept bitter tears over the narrative of Mr. Carmichael's last farewell. That he should have left the Kirk of Scotland did not surprise her; for it had long been manifest to her that his heart was not entirely in it; but that he should have quitted it thus, misled by the fatal deification of individual, human, fallible teachers, so constantly seen to be the result of that boasted liberty of private judgment which rejects all Church authority and tradition as mental bondage, was indeed a grief of heart to her. And the idea of Mr. Carmichael was too inseparably interwoven with all the memories of bye-gone days, from the very first hour of their meeting to her last reminiscence of him,—those few touching lines which more than half betrayed the secret of his heart,—to pass away and be forgotten. Beatrice, like Helen, could scarcely picture to herself what the parish of Kingsconnell would be without him.

The next event of consequence narrated by Helen was the marriage of Emily Bertram, to the gentleman who has been named as Mr. Loftus, but who now appeared under the title of Lord St. George. This took place in London; but in the course of a year after, or thereabouts, the house of Kingsconnell was again thrown open. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, after long absence, returned to take up their permanent abode there; Lord and Lady St. George arrived to visit them, and once more the old mansion was the scene of mirth and gaiety, as of old. Helen Sempill and her husband were amongst the invited guests there, on various occasions; and she spoke of the strange sensations with which she revisited a place so replete, for her, with saddening and thrilling associations; and her astonishment at the complete act of oblivion of the past, which seemed to have effaced all such recollection in her hosts. She told of the smiles, and the affectionate, but unembarrassed salute with which she was met by Emily, whom she had last seen in tears, and anguish, and remorse, stealing into her's and Beatrice's presence like a penitent, to request the latter to visit her brother on his death-bed. She marvelled in

her simplicity over the easy, friendly, and rather affectionate reception which she, the sister of Beatrice, met with from Lady Bertram and Sir Thomas; and she told how gay and happy they all appeared; while she never saw a door open, or heard a sound, that did not set her heart a-beating with a wild expectation of beholding William or Hugh; and whichever way she turned,—whatever room she entered,—she fancied there before her the beautiful countenance and graceful form of Arthur, and the bright, young, beaming face of her sister, as she had last seen them together under that very roof. Helen did not understand the benumbing influence over the feelings of a life carried on amid outer things alone, and which never dares to look into the depths of its own being. Besides, the world for which, and in which, they lived and moved, was dealing very bountifully with the Kingsconnell family. About a year after his marriage, Arthur's father-in-law had died; and the beautiful Mary was now Viscountess Mountjoye in her own right; her husband, in his wife's, lord of all her fair possessions and ample fortune. They had taken up their residence at Milldenhanger; and shone as stars of the first magnitude in the

galaxy of London fashion. One thing alone was wanting;—they had no children. It was said that more than one disappointment in hopes of the kind had been sustained, in consequence of Lady Mountjoye's unpardonable levity, in refusing to subject herself to the privation of her wonted exercise and amusement; but this having been the case, there was of course everything to hope from the future. With this solitary drawback, what could be more brilliant than the prospects of their surviving son in Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram's eyes? They daily felt more and more reason to congratulate themselves on the lot which he had drawn in life. Not many months after their re-establishment at Kingsconnell, the member for the county died, and in consequence of a numerously-signed requisition to that effect, Arthur Bertram offered himself as a candidate for its representation; and, with his lady, came down to Kingsconnell, in order to carry on the contest in person. It was a very keen one; an opposition candidate of so-called liberal principles, a wealthy Glasgow merchant, who had purchased an estate in the county, having taken the field, and being backed, of course, by all the ten-pound voters,

under the recently-enacted Reform Bill. There was a lavish expenditure of money ; and not a little of that infallible testimony to freedom and enlightenment, rioting and fighting, in the different towns ! but at last the Kingsconnell interest carried the day. Mr. Bertram was declared duly elected, and the triumph was celebrated by a splendid ball at Kingsconnell, of which Helen did not fail to send her sister an ample description.

“ How strangely, Beatrice,” so she wrote, after a lengthened detail of all the arrangements, on a scale of the utmost magnificence, “ how strangely was I reminded of the last ball at that house throughout the evening ! Walter and I mutually recalled it to each other many times. Eight long years since that night, and I believe we could have been lovers still ! I am sure we love each other more dearly now than we did then. It was not of myself, however, dearest, that I thought most. Oh, no, my Beatrice ! My thoughts were of you.

* * * *

“ But when I looked at Arthur (I cannot get over that old familiar name) I involuntarily exclaimed to Walter,

——— ‘ Oh, how changed since yon blithe night ! ’

Who could have thought it? It is not that he has lost his beauty. It is impossible to conceive any thing more perfect in face, in figure, in that matchless grace that runs through everything he does. But the change in his expression! You recollect—who recollects half so well?—the bright, open, joyous aspect he used to have? It is gone,—gone,—not a trace of it left. There is a wild, reckless look at times in his face, at others an appearance of gloom—of something more than gloom,—something almost approaching to desperation. I wonder if other people remarked the change as much as I did? His face haunted me for days after. Well it might too! for I cannot tell you how often I caught those dark, melancholy eyes of his fixed upon me, Beatrice! We never spoke, and I was so glad of it. When we went in at first, he advanced to shake hands with Walter and me, as with every body else; and I felt a sort of dimness come over my eyes. I could not see him distinctly. I was only conscious of the touch of his hand; but Walter told me afterwards that at the sight of me he became deadly pale, and that the air of self-possession with which he came forward to meet us evidently cost him a powerful effort. He

never again came near me ; evidently, pointedly, avoided doing so ; but yet at every turn, whether I happened to be dancing or sitting still, I found, on looking up, his eyes fixed upon me. There is more altered in him than his countenance too ! His manner, you know, is charming,—never can be anything else ; but it did strike me, and it struck Walter more forcibly, that towards ladies it is more what would suit an unmarried than a married man. I own I rather wonder at any woman not becoming conscious of such things in her intercourse with men. I have not mentioned Lady Mountjoye. She has expanded into a splendidly-beautiful woman ; her dress, her air, her manner, are perfection. So I heard every one say, gentlemen especially ; and I do so dread the construction which is often put upon a woman's differing with them respecting the attractions of one of her own sex, that I did not venture to express a contrary opinion. But I did not like her manner. I do not like to see a married woman surrounded by a train of gentlemen ; still less to see her undisguisedly flirting with them, as she does. There is something in her that seems to be actually irresistible. Wherever she moves, she is followed ;

no man whom she distinguishes by her notice seems able to think of any one else. I observed various instances of that ; and I think she is not at all scrupulous in exercising her power ; not considerate of the feelings of her own sex. But beautiful she is,—most beautiful ! I never saw her and her husband together all the evening. Of course he was much engaged, and he paid attention to every one ; nobody had cause to feel himself overlooked. But Lord Mordington's youngest son, Henry Home, told Walter that it is said they are very unhappy together ; that Lady Mountjoye's conduct often touches the verge of actual levity, and that there are constant quarrels between them on that subject, in which, unfortunately, she has too often an advantage over him, for he is not a good husband any more than she is a good wife. Not (Mr. Home said) that it is in Arthur's nature to be unkind to any one ; but he is, alas ! not domestic ; wild, extravagant, even dissipated. In short, Beatrice, beneath all the splendour of the outward show, it is my melancholy conviction that this being, so nobly endowed by nature,—so full of all that was good, and who might have been so different under different influences, is a lost man ; that he has shipwrecked his own virtue and happi-

ness, and that he is still haunted by a torturing sense of what he has forfeited, without any longer possessing the power to retrace his steps. But how little does the world in general think of these things ! Worthy Dr. Chisholm, though I quote his words, is not the only person by thousands who says, and feels, ‘ Well, I am sure Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram have every reason to be happy in those children who are left them ! Their utmost ambition must be satisfied with regard to both.’ ”

Time rolled on, and Beatrice heard of Arthur after this, as distinguishing himself in Parliament. He appeared to have flung himself into public life as a new excitement, to dull the aching void within. It was at least a better and nobler species of excitement, and so far matter of rejoicing. His home continued to be a childless one, and in no respects a happier. His sister, however, was the mother of several children. Change and death, meanwhile, had not failed to visit the old haunts. Poor Mrs. Lockhart, after a healthy old age prolonged beyond the ordinary limits of life, was carried off by a sudden stroke ; and not very long after her death, her daughters, neither of whom was capable of carrying on the species of

country housekeeping, of which she was the mainspring, left the Grange, and took up their residence in the little town of Gatesford, about two miles off. There Miss Willie luxuriated in Dissent, attended the meetings of Tract Societies, and predominated over Clothing Clubs; and good Miss Grace pursued her usual course of study with undiminished zeal; spoilt Helen's children whenever in the course of their summer and Christmas visits to Sempilltower, she could manage to lay hold of them; talked of her dear niece Mrs. Sumner, and read aloud all her letters to everybody who chose to listen to them, a fact of which Helen considerably apprized Beatrice, that she might the better know what to write and what not to write. Mr. Lockhart Clephane talked of letting the Grange, but meanwhile it was standing empty, under the charge of Lowry M'Fyke, whom it rejoiced Beatrice to learn that he had retained about the place.

A blank more irreparable had occurred in the neighbourhood six years after Bertrice left it. The good old Laird of Sempilltower, full of years and honours, was gathered to his fathers, bequeathing to his son a prouder heritage than his ample worldly possessions, that of a spotless

name, never to be mentioned without love and reverence by any who had known him. His widow, sustained under the desolation of her bereavement by the sure and certain hope of re-union at no distant date amongst those who "sleep in Jesus," had, besides the consolation afforded by the duteous affection of her son and grand-children, the additional comfort imparted by the tender love of her who was her daughter in all save the ties of blood. George Sempill had died in Madeira so nearly at the same time with his father, that the latter departed life unaware that his son had gone before him ; and Helen, according to the custom of the family, returned to find her home in the old mansion with her brother Reginald. There the Major, apparently so much more infirm a man than his elder brother, was still alive and vigorous, and the kindly ministrations of Aunt Penny and "Mrs. George" were all directed to securing the comfort of his old age.

Matters stood thus at home, when in the eighth winter after her marriage Beatrice had the comfort of receiving a *vivâ voce* account of her sister, of Miss Violet Alexander, who flourished in a state of grim unchangeableness, apparently neither older nor younger,—of Mr.

Malcolm, now an aged man—and of many other friends of her early days, from a young clergyman well-known to them all, who having suffered in the cause of hard reading at Oxford, had come to spend the winter in Genoa, where he had a near relation amongst the British merchants. This young man, a cadet of one of the oldest families in the north of Scotland, was a devoted son of her ancient Church, and deeply imbued with the spirit which at that time had begun to diffuse new life and energy through the institutions of his University, and the whole Church at large. His zeal, tempered by discretion and Christian love, was not suffered to slumber amongst his expatriated countrymen, and the knowledge of him seemed to open up a new era in the spiritual life of Beatrice. Not that the views of Catholic truth which she heard from Mr. Grant were novel to her. They were such as she had been in the habit of listening to in former years from Mr. Malcolm; for let it not be forgotten by the English Church, that many important truths long suffered to remain in abeyance by her authorised teachers, were preserved, inculcated, cherished as their most precious inheritance by the truly Apostolic men, who in poverty, in depression, exposed on all sides to misrepresentation and

obloquy, and their very existence scarce known to those who might have been expected to sympathise most deeply with their trials, adhered with unflinching constancy to the Communion of her "Sister of the Northern Hills." So truly was this the case, that upon the first promulgation of these revived views from Oxford, one of the holiest men, and humblest Christians, whom any Church has ever produced,* averred that they had come upon him "like a gleam of light from Paradise." But although there was no novelty in the teaching, it fell now upon a soil better prepared to receive it. And on Mr. Sumner's mind, likewise, the intimacy which accident at first led him to cultivate with Mr. Grant, slowly but surely began to operate a wonderful change. A largeness, a spirituality in his views of religious truth, an opening and softening of his whole nature, became apparent; and the heart of his wife expanded in the hope of a future affording more community of thought and feeling with him, than had as yet been permitted her, and ascended in devout thanksgiving to Him by whose agency, through the means of His mortal servant, the good work had been begun.

* The late Right Reverend Alexander Jolly, D.D., Bishop of Moray.

CHAPTER XVI.

.....“Darker grew
The deepening cloud above.
At length it opened, and—

* * * * *

The Sarsar from its womb went forth
The icy wind of death.”

THALABA.

THE ninth anniversary of Beatrice's marriage had been some little time passed, when late one evening her husband and she sat talking over the prospect, which they had of late begun to entertain, of paying a visit to England in the course of the following spring. There would have been nothing but joy and glad anticipation in the thought, so far as Beatrice was concerned, save for one painful drawback. It was necessary that they should again return to Italy; and equally so, for the sake of their little boy's education, that he should be left at home; and the idea of parting with her che-

rished darling, whose peculiar gentleness, and promise of early talent, rendered him an object of intense interest, as well as of affection, to the mother's heart, was a very agonizing one. Could he have been near her own dear sister, or her Aunt Helen, Beatrice felt that the trial would have been less; but naturally, inevitably, his father destined him to an English education; and her heart recoiled from the prospect of her little loving Edward being cast upon the hard and measured care of Mrs. Sumner, whose house must in that case be his home. The anticipation, distant though it still was, rushed vividly before her in the course of their conversation; and as she sat silently, a few minutes after, bending over some work,—one large tear after another overflowed her eyes, and fell heavily down upon it. Her husband, who was leaning back in one of the quaint old gilt legged sofas, nearly opposite to her, kept his eyes for a few minutes upon her without speaking,—then at last addressed her.

“Beatrice?” he said in a gentle voice.

“Yes, Edward!” she hastily drew her hand over her long heavy eye-lashes, and looked up.

“Come over here, dear.” Then as she obeyed, and sat down beside him,—he passed

his arm around her, and drew her closer to his side. "You are crying about your boy, Beatrice?" he said as he did so.

Beatrice made no audible reply. Overcome by the tenderness of his tone, so different from what Edward would once have used in talking of what formerly he would have designated romantic and over-strained feeling, she laid her head upon his shoulder, and wept without restraint. He allowed her for a few minutes to do so,—then gently and soothingly spoke again,—not as the Edward Sumner of their early married life had been wont to speak. He reminded her of the absolute necessity for the painful step in contemplation, if she would have her son be rendered fit to assume his natural position as a well-born and educated English gentleman; but he consoled her by assurances that a few years would, he had every reason to think, enable him to quit Italy for a permanent home in his native country. And, in the meantime, he promised that their boy should not be suffered to grow up in ignorance of his natural friends on one side, that he should visit Scotland occasionally, and learn to know his mother's family. His kind words, his sympathy, did more to convey a balm to

the heart of Beatrice than anything else could have done.

"Dear, dear Edward!" she said, flinging her arms round him,—“how very kind you are! how I love you!”

"I have not been always kind, Beatrice," said he, returning her caress. "I often now recall past instances of unkindness, and want of feeling for you, with which you never reproached me, dear; but which my own conscience brings up in judgment against me, more frequently than you imagine."

"Oh! Edward, dearest!" she exclaimed, "why should you say so? do not fancy it. You have always been kind to me."

"I have always loved you, Beatrice,—always; and more and more dearly every day. And you have loved me, have you not?"

"Indeed, indeed, I have, Edward! and every day of my life I love you better."

"But yet I know, well, Beatrice, that I might have rendered you happier at first. I did not make allowances for your loving, clinging, self-depreciating temper; I have often been harsh to you, dear, and often given you pain, I am sure; but you little know what self-reproach the recollection of these things has

caused me; of late especially. I can only hope to repair the past in the future, my own little wife, and render you as happy as you deserve to be."

"My own darling Edward! Yes, I am sure, please God, that there is a happy future before us. Do not talk of such things for a moment. I am sure that I must often have troubled and annoyed you at first. But it is all over long ago."

He pressed his lips to her forehead; and then they again fell into a discussion of various matters connected with their visit home. After a little while Edward arose from his seat, and took up one of the *lucerne* which stood upon a marble table near the door.

"I think I shall bid you good-night, Beatrice," he said, "if you mean to sit late."

"I do not intend to be late, dear Edward," she replied. "I have only a few lines to add to a letter. To-morrow is foreign-post day, you know. Are you so sleepy that you must go to bed already?"

"Not sleepy, dear," he said, "but a little tired. I do not feel very well."

"Not feel well, dearest Edward?" exclaimed

Beatrice rising and coming up to him. "What is the matter? What can I do for you?"

"Nothing in the world, love," he answered with a smile. "I shall be perfectly comfortable as soon as I have lain down."

"You do not feel faint, do you, Edward?" asked Beatrice in a tone of anxiety. He had of late been at times subject to palpitation at the heart, and attacks of faintness, at which she had fancied that their medical attendant, although he did not say much, had looked grave; but her anxiety was calmed by his assurances that he had no sensation of the kind, and that a trifling indisposition, which made him feel inclined to rest, was all of which he had to complain.

"I want nothing, dearest," he said. "If I do, I shall call Antonio. I shall probably fall asleep before you come, so good-night. God bless you!"

He kissed her affectionately, and left the room. Beatrice, her momentary uneasiness dispelled by his manner, sat down to finish her letter; and as she poured forth to her sister all the anxieties of her heart respecting her boy, the tears which her husband's kind-

ness had dried, again burst forth. She felt how far her heart was from submission, how much she lacked strength for such a trial as was now shadowed out before her; what need she had of prayer;—and according to the too frequent fashion of our faithless humanity, unconscious that over her very head a dark cloud of calamity was hanging ripe to break, she spent two long hours of this silent night in “shaping the fashion of uncertain evils,”—picturing forth in her own mind the details of a sorrow which was never destined to come.

At last Beatrice bethought her that it was high time to retire to rest. Shading her lamp with her hand, she stole softly into her own apartment, dreading to disturb her husband. Her children’s nursery was in the next room of the suite to Edward’s dressing-room, and she meant to proceed to pay her usual nightly visit to them; but as she passed, she glanced into the bed, hoping to see him asleep. To her surprise it was empty, arranged in the usual manner for the night, and had evidently never been occupied. An indefinable thrill of alarm darted through her mind, and she hastily crossed the large apartment, and pushed open the door of the dressing-room.

It was lighted by a cresset from the roof, which was still burning, and by its light she saw her husband, in his dressing-gown, lying back upon a couch at the extremity of the room. Supposing that he had fallen asleep, she softly advanced, and bent over him. He appeared as if sunk in a profound slumber, one arm stretched by his side, the forefinger between the open leaves of a Prayer-book, which he held in his hand. The other arm was raised upon the pillow of the couch, above his head. Beatrice approached her lips to his forehead, with the intention of thus awakening him, but started back in horror. His eyes were not closed! One mute instant she stood transfixed, the very pulsations of her heart seeming to cease,—then with a desperate resolution, laid her hand on his. It was icy cold. He had indeed “fallen asleep before she came.”

One shriek escaped her lips, so loud, so piercing, that it rung through every apartment of the extensive house, and startled all its inmates from their sleep in a moment. Then in agony too great for words, or cries, or tears, the widowed wife flung herself upon the inanimate form of her husband.

CHAPTER XVII.

“———— In lui versò d’ inèssicabil’ vena
 Lagrimè e voce di sospiri mista.
 In che misèro punto or quì mi mena
 Fortuna? Ah che veduta amara e trista!
 Dopo gran tempo f’ ti ritrovo appena,
 Tancredí, é ti riveggio, e non son vista;
 Vista non son da te, benchè presente;
 E trovando ti perdo eternamente!
 Apre Tancredí gli occhí, e poi gli abbassa
 Torbidi e gravi: ed ella pur sì lagna.”

GERUSALEMME LIBERATA.

WE pass over the first stunning, bewildering, overwhelming agony of bereavement; — the dead, dark silent days that follow,—the more, far more, acutely painful return to the duties of life, and the agonizing as importunate form in which these press upon a woman bereft of her natural protector. These must have been felt to be conceived; as also must the kindness, the pity, the sympathy, which the occurrence of such a calamity causes to gush forth on all

sides of the sufferer ; often where it could previously have least been expected. Such was the experience of Beatrice, as it has been of many ; and it were hard to say whether her heart were more deeply touched by the unbounded expressions of affection and of fellow-feeling with her sorrow, which reached her from her absent friends, or by the unexpected and unsolicited kindness and good offices of some who until now had been comparative strangers to her.

Still there is no desolation equal to that of widowhood, and in her case it seemed aggravated by the mode in which the blow had been dealt,—the tie severed at the very time when it began to be of so much closer and more tender a nature than at first. It was long, long ere Beatrice could recall the circumstances of that last night, the particulars of that memorable conversation, without such pangs of anguish as would cause her to fling herself prostrate down, and gasp for the power to give utterance in cries and tears to the crushing load of her misery. But in time, by God's grace, that first wretchedness passed away. In time she came to bless His holy name for Edward, and to feel that a sanctifying

influence had been at work within his heart in these latter days. The Prayer-book which had attracted his last earthly glance, and which his hand had clasped in death, was laid, as a relic equally precious, beside the Christian Year of William and Violet, and Beatrice learned "in faith to muse" upon the growth of her store of friends in Paradise.

Slowly and sadly the autumn and the winter rolled away; and during their course she remained stationary where the spoiler had found her. In the end of April she had resolved to begin her journey home with her children,—a journey how different from what she had once anticipated! Various kind offers had been pressed upon her, by Captain Sempill, by the elder Mr. Sumner, and by his son, to come out for the purpose of escorting her home; but all these she at once declined as unnecessary. She had resolved to retain the services of a faithful Italian domestic, who had been with her and Edward from the beginning of their married life, until she should cross the Tyrol and embark upon the Rhine; and with Antonio's help she felt perfectly independent. He would return to Italy with the Vetturino whom she meant to engage for that part of the

journey. Her own maid, the German, formerly mentioned, had agreed to go to Britain with her.

It was with bitter grief that Beatrice bade adieu for ever to the home of her wedded life, —to the beautiful city and unrivalled bay,—above all, to the many kind friends with whom she had so long lived on terms of intimacy, now never more to be renewed, and to the attached servants whom she was compelled to leave behind. The little Edward, a child of acute sensibility, who had sorrowed for his father with a grief beyond his years, and who possessed much of his mother's early development of feeling and character, partook in her distress, though its traces in him were not so lasting; and even his young sister, Beatrice, shed many tears at the last leave-taking,—quickly dried, however, by the change of scene and excitement of travelling.

The route by which Beatrice had resolved to leave Italy was that by Verona and the Tyrol; a less direct one for her than going across the Splugen; but it was the road which her husband had talked of pursuing on their homeward journey; he had dwelt upon its beauties, and anticipated the delight which she would feel in its romantic associations; and

the recollection of this guided her present choice. Desiring to impress upon the memory, at least of her boy, the idea of the land which he was thus early quitting, feeling no inclination to hasten her own desolate home-coming to the house of her mother-in-law, which must of course be the first goal of her wanderings, and sensible that the best medicine for her weary and lacerated heart was to be found under the sublime influences of nature, she so arranged the agreement with her Vetturino as to have it in her power to proceed as slowly, and to make as many halts as she wished, on the road; and under his auspices, and those of Antonio, the journey began and proceeded most prosperously. Even Beatrice, after she had looked and wept her last adieu to the sunny plains of Italy, began almost in her own despite, to feel the reviving effects of the delicious mountain air, and of the glorious scenery up the course of the Adige. The mode of proceeding adopted by the Vetturino, Filippo, a worthy specimen of his class, and most sedulously attentive to the comforts of his party, was to make a long stage at a very early hour, and then stop for breakfast and a two hours' halt, followed by another longer stage before

dinner. In this way, the travellers were enabled to see a great deal of the country; and Beatrice, with her delighted children, made many excursions on foot from their different halting places, besides her occasionally permitting them to alight at the steep ascents, when Filippo was walking alongside of his horses. Then, under Antonio's guardianship, they scrambled up the steep mountain sides in pursuit of the lovely flowers, of every imaginable brilliant hue, which grew in the crevices of the rocks; or walked on more leisurely by their vivacious and talkative charioteer, little Edward glancing now and then, with eyes full of merry mischief, at his mother, on the occurrence of any of Filippo's oft repeated, and as often abortive, attempts at conversation, upon every encounter that took place with chance passengers on the road. The Vetturino had no German, a want of which he was made acutely sensible in the course of the journey; and which Antonio was equally incapable of supplying; and these dialogues on the way were invariably of the same nature.

“ *Parla Italiano?* ”

A guttural response, implying a decided negative, was the unfailing answer.

“*Che Bestia !*” then would Filippo exclaim, with an appealing look to his countryman. “*Non mi capisce ; Non sa parlare !*”

Another unfailing source of amusement to the children consisted in watching Filippo settling accounts at the different inns in the Tyrol, in none of which, as they advanced, did they find any inmates who could communicate with him in his own language. To witness the singular pantomime which was wont to ensue between the parties,—the quiet Tyrolese *Kammerfrauen* scoring up their bills in white chalk upon the under-side of their huge pockets, covered with black leather, and the fiery Italian venting his perplexities in impatient ejaculations, addressed to Antonio, of “*Che Bestie !*”—“*Queste Bestie nonc apiscono niente !*” &c. &c., and finally compelled to have recourse to the good offices of Meta, Mrs. Sumner’s German maid, as interpretress, enchanted the little boy, who was wont to enact the whole scene afterwards for his mother’s edification.

At last, their slow and pleasant progress brought Beatrice and her children to the beautiful country inn of Mittiwald, on the banks of the Eisach, famed for its trout-fishing, and much-frequented by tourists on that account, as

well as from being a head-quarter whence many picturesque mountain excursions may be made. Here Beatrice resolved to remain some days for a similar purpose. There was something to her inexpressibly attractive,—something soothing and delicious, in the aspect of this beautiful place. The long, low wooden building itself, situated in a narrow defile of the mountains; its side next the garden covered with trellis-work, over which the luxuriant vines are trained; the dancing, sparkling mountain stream, at the foot of the garden, crossed by a pretty rustic bridge, whence a winding path leads up the opposite mountain; the picturesque beauty of the rocks and precipices, into which the lofty hills are broken; the tiny cascades, half seen, half hidden by feathery shrubs; the goats scrambling where scarcely even a goat, as it seems, can find space to tread; the cottages perched aloft, or peeping here and there from amongst overhanging coppice wood; and the white clouds floating tranquilly half-way down the mountain's sides;—form a *tout-ensemble* of romance and loveliness, such as the heart loves to rest on; such as

———“Soothes the troubled breast,
And wooes the weary to profound repose.”

Thus she felt it, during two days which she spent in wandering with her children through this enchanted land. There were not above one or two other travellers in the inn, French and German young men, by the glimpses she obtained of them ; but not caring to encounter the publicity of the Speise-Saal, and there being, as usual, no private sitting-rooms in the house, she was fain to use as such the clean, though homely, bed-room assigned her ; and so remained in entire seclusion. It was not during the day that Beatrice felt her desolation ; but in the evening, the gloriously-beautiful evening, the hour of memory ; at night when her children were asleep, and she sat alone, living over her past life,—when

“ The ghosts of the departed
Entered at the open door ;”

Then it was that a sense of loneliness, of bereavement so overpowering, would come across her,—the long, long path of the future would look so joyless, so dark, so cold, that her heart would sink, and her agonizing tears flow, with a feeling of abandonment as complete as in the first days of her widowhood.

At a very early hour in the morning of her third day at Mittiwald, Beatrice was startled

from sleep by a sudden noise and uproar in the house, so loud that she sprang from her bed, and went to the window to discover the cause; but it overlooked the garden and bridge alone, so that nothing was to be discovered from it. The noise died away, and she lay down once more, and fell into a profound sleep, which was broken at last by the joyous voices of her children, as they ran into the room ready-dressed to go out, and wondering to find their mamma so much later than usual.

In the course of her morning toilette Beatrice learned from her maid that the disturbance in the house that morning had been caused by the arrival of an English carriage, which was understood to be in pursuit of another that had passed still earlier, long before day-break; both from the Italian side. The frantic impatience of the occupants, whoever they might be, to get on, and the stolid immoveability of the German post-boys, especially when newly awakened out of sleep, had been the cause of the uproar. The circumstance passed from Beatrice's mind; until in the afternoon, just after her children and she had concluded their early dinner, her little girl, who had run along the corridor which traverses the house from back to

front, and was looking out of the window commanding the latter, suddenly called out, "Mamma, Mamma! Eddy! Meta! come here, come and tell me what has happened."

Beatrice, in compliance with the child's request, came out of her room, and followed Edward's eager footsteps. She looked to the front of the house, and beheld a carriage, manifestly of English build, the horses' heads turned towards Italy; and carriage, horses, and post-boys covered with dust and hardened mud. A crowd, composed of every living creature in and about the inn, was assembled near its door; and a Babel of German gutturals was resounding far and wide. There too were Antonio and Filippo, exclaiming and gesticulating, and impelling the useless assistants aside, while they themselves coming close up to the carriage-door, seemed aiding some one within to descend. In a few minutes, supported by another person from behind, the figure of a gentleman, apparently very ill, or wounded, was lifted out, and by the united help of all three, was borne slowly into the house.

The children were still exclaiming and wondering over the circumstance, when the landlady of the inn appeared, and addressed

Beatrice with much respectful eagerness. If the *Gnädige Frau*, she said, would do her the kindness to come to the *saal*, she would be everlastingly grateful. Here was a very sad affair;—an English gentleman, desperately wounded, had been brought to the house; he himself was insensible,—his servant, an Englishman, who could not make himself intelligible in German, and the *Gnädige Frau's* servants could not interpret what he said to her. Would she herself have the bounty to come and assist them? Beatrice required no second bidding. Despatching her children to the garden, with many injunctions to be quiet, she desired Meta to follow her, and accompanied her hostess to the *saal*.

Here she found a group of persons standing round an extempore couch, composed of cushions laid upon several benches joined together. Her own servant and the Vetturino were there; one or two rosy-cheeked Tyrolese maidens, with faces of excessive trouble and perplexity, holding water and other restoratives; and a respectable-looking English servant, who kneeling by the couch, with one arm supported the head of the person lying upon it, while with his other hand he was bathing his fore-

head. The face of the wounded man was not visible to Beatrice; but one arm hung helplessly by his side, and over the fingers of the hand a stream of blood was slowly trickling, drop by drop, to the ground.

"What has happened? Can I be of use?" she said in English, as she drew near. The servant uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Ah! thank Heaven! an English lady! Oh! yes, madam, I am sure Providence has sent you to our assistance. My poor dear master!"

He withdrew the handkerchief which he had been holding to the forehead of the insensible form before her, and Beatrice bent over him. The start, the shock,—the thrill of anguish—had nearly laid her prostrate by his side; but by a strong effort she mastered her emotion, though she could not avoid catching at Meta's arm for support, ere she nerved herself to look again. It was no mistake! the pale countenance,—the rich hair matted on the white forehead,—the blue-veined eyelids half-closed over the heavy eyes,—were those of the lover of her youth. Arthur Bertram lay before her, a wounded, apparently a dying man!

Beatrice had long been training in calmness,—long learning to discipline the impetuous feelings of her earlier days ; but it was long since her self-command had been put to such a trial. A brief, but severe, internal struggle, a prayer for strength, enabled her to conquer ; and in a few minutes she was sufficiently composed to speak with perfect self-possession to the Englishman. She explained to him in a few quiet words that she knew his master ; they were old friends ; but that when he recovered his senses he must not be agitated at first by any mention of her. She would herself, she said, render every assistance in her power to Mr. Bertram ; and so would her maid, who was a person of great experience. Comforted by her gentle words, and by the sympathy of a countrywoman, the man, who had appeared utterly bewildered, began to recover his presence of mind ; and in the course of a wonderfully short time, by the active assistance of the kindly people of the house, to whom Beatrice and her maid explained what they wanted done, a bed was arranged in one of the quietest of the rooms,—as nearly in the English fashion as in the nature of things could be managed with the component parts of

a German bed; curtains were contrived to shade the window, and mats of different kinds collected to lay upon the bare floor. To this Arthur Bertram was removed, and Antonio having providentially discovered that one of the young Frenchmen at present residing in the house was a surgeon who had studied in Paris, and taken his diploma there, he was summoned to the assistance of the sufferer; while Beatrice, enjoining upon Meta the charge of her children when she should be required in the sick-room, retired to her own apartment to pass the interval in prayer.

It was a long one; but at last a tap came to her door, and Meta appeared. The surgeon, she said, had extracted the pistol-ball, which had lodged in the shoulder; but the operation had been severe, and the patient had fainted twice. He was now in a species of stupor; and Harris, the English servant, had told her that it would be an inexpressible comfort to him to see her mistress, and be permitted to ask her advice on various subjects. Beatrice accordingly repaired instantly to Arthur's room.

He was lying in bed in the same attitude in which she had first seen him, perfectly mo-

tionless, with half-closed eyes. His servant stood by watching him; the tears running down his cheeks.

"Be composed," said Beatrice in a low voice, as she approached. "If we can keep down fever, your master may do well. You must expect to see him much exhausted just now."

"Alas! madam," replied the man, "I dread his regaining his senses more than all. It has been a cruel business; and the worst is still to come."

Then withdrawing from the vicinity of the patient, he poured forth a narrative of the causes which had led to his present condition; and Beatrice gathered what she had from the first suspected. Arthur had fallen by the hand of his wife's seducer! She now recollected, as Harris' story proceeded, that Helen had written to her in the beginning of the previous winter, an account of Arthur's having paired off for the approaching session of Parliament with another member, and having gone abroad with his wife; it was alleged, on purpose to remove her from the attentions of an admirer more unscrupulous than any of the hundreds who had hitherto danced attendance on her. This was the Duke of Templeford, a man seven

or eight years her own junior ; and one of the most accomplished amongst the young nobility of the day. But Lady Mountjoye, in her thirty-first year, was still in the very prime and flower of her rare beauty, and skilled in the employment of her still rarer art of fascination, to a degree which no younger woman could have been. This noble lover was a very slave at her feet ; he could not live without her ; and he followed her to Naples, and subsequently to Rome, where during the past season her own and Arthur's domestic unhappiness had reached a pitch hitherto unknown ; and the Duke's devotion to her become matter of public notoriety. Her husband, once the object of a passion equally violent on her part, she had now learned almost to hate, and to treat with the most marked neglect.

“ My master,” said Harris, “ has been far from strong during the past winter and spring. He had several severe attacks of fever at Rome, I have no doubt brought on, or aggravated, by distress of mind ; and my lady has left him, night after night, left him ill in bed, or confined to the sofa, when he needed some one to be with him even more, to go out to those balls where she met the Duke ! At last

the affair became so public that he could stand it no longer. He brought my lady off to Venice at a day's notice, and his Grace followed her there privately. Mr. Bertram was taken with one of these sudden illnesses soon after our arrival; and they seized that opportunity to meet and arrange their elopement. He rose from his sick-bed to follow them!"

It appeared that in spite of the almost superhuman exertions which the injured husband had made to overtake the culprits, they would have kept the start which they had gained of him, but for an accident which had happened to their carriage. He came up with them half-way between Mittiwald and Stirzing. His wife and he did not meet. Lady Mountjoye had taken shelter in a chalet until the damage could be repaired; and Arthur, half frantic from a sense of his wrongs, had compelled the seducer to fight, though without seconds, and contrary to his wishes. Harris described the grief and horror of the young nobleman as extreme, when, after firing in the air the first time, his adversary had forced him to the second and more fatal shot; and it appeared to Beatrice from all that he said, that in the present case the partner of the Duke's

guilt was the most deeply involved in sin of the two.

It was now necessary that Sir Thomas Bertram should be apprised of the late disgraceful events, and of the precarious state of his son ; and this, one of the points on which Harris requested advice, Beatrice begged him to do without delay, so that the letter might be forwarded by the next courier who should come that way. Evening was now drawing on ; and having for a little while quitted the unconscious sufferer, and seen her children in their beds, Beatrice sent Meta to desire Harris, who had not been in bed since his master and he left Venice, to retire to rest without loss of time, so as to recruit his strength against a period when he might be more wanted than he was at present. Mrs. Sumner herself, and Antonio, would watch in Mr. Bertram's room that night ; and Meta would be in the opposite chamber, within call, if she were required. To this, after some demur, the faithful servant at last agreed. The house sunk to quiet and stillness, and Beatrice,—her Bible and Prayer-Book beside her, took her station by the side of Arthur's bed ; while Antonio, by her orders, laid himself, wrapped in his cloak, upon the

mats at the other end of the room, and was speedily asleep.

Beatrice was alone ; alone, a widow, with the worse than widowed friend and lover of her early days. Thus they were again brought together ! And as she sat perusing by the shaded light the alteration in that countenance, so long the load-star of her existence, the change in its expression,—the lines which care and error and a reckless life had traced there,—so that it almost seemed to wear the aspect of “ Archangel ruined,” a tide, a very flood of bitter, desolating memories swept over her soul ! From first to last,—from their first encounter, a boy and girl, in the library at Kingsconnell, on—on—to the last, the very last,—the miserable, thrice-miserable meeting and parting in the school-room at the Grange, all their life of love passed in review before her. Then she recalled that hideous incident in the Colosseum, and shuddered ; and then her eye rested on that pale inanimate face, and she thought of all that Harris had just been telling her.

“ And she could leave you, Arthur ? ” she said. “ She who once professed to love you could leave you, ill and suffering, could for-

sake and disgrace you at last ! Oh ! she could never have loved you, never as I did, whom you left for her. And now I have been brought by the mysterious guiding of Providence, to succour you in your desolation. Might but my prayers be heard on your behalf, Arthur, they would call down peace to that wounded spirit, and bring back those erring footsteps to the better path."

And as the thought crossed her mind, she knelt down by his bed-side, and in a low voice, with fervent devotion, offered up some of the Church's holy prayers for the sick. She had fancied Arthur unconscious, but at the conclusion of the sacred office, as she still knelt in silent supplication, she felt one of her hands gently pressed by his left hand, that belonging to the unwounded arm, which had been lying on the quilt. Rising from her knees, she bent over him. His eyes continued closed, but as she raised his head upon her arm for the purpose of offering him a restorative draught, of which he swallowed a few drops, he suddenly opened them, and looked her earnestly in the face. But Beatrice was much altered ; she knew she was. There could be but little to recall the beaming countenance and dancing

ringlets of the girl, in the pale, calm, serene, but grief-worn face of the widow, with its shrouding cap and straight bands of hair; and it did not surprise her, though it gave her an unreasonable, momentary pang, that in his languid and exhausted state, Arthur failed to recognise her. His eyes again closed heavily, and a deep sigh escaped him. Then, after lying for a few minutes silent, he spoke in a low, faint, scarce-audible voice, to ask where he was, where Harris was, and what had happened?

“You are at Mittiwald,” whispered Beatrice, in reply. “You have been ill, and Harris has been with you all day. I desired him to go to bed now, and let me watch by you?”

“And you, who are so kind to me,” said Arthur, “may I ask your name? I ought to know that voice.”

“To-morrow,” replied Beatrice, in the same low tone, striving to restrain the hysterical affection in her throat, which almost impeded her speech “to-morrow you may ask more, but not to-night. You must not talk, nor must I talk to you.”

“How did I come here?” resumed Arthur,

raising his hand with a bewildered air to his forehead, "I have a recollection——"

Terrified for the consequences of his recalling the dark recollections of the past days, Beatrice interrupted him by an entreaty that he would talk no more just then. He yielded, too ill and confused in mind to think long connectedly, and with her hand clasped in his, presently sunk into a broken and feverish slumber, while she watched beside, ever and anon lifting her heart in fervent prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Nun wohlan! Es ist vollbracht!
Durch des Schlusses 'schauer Nacht,
Sey gepriesen, Ew'ge Macht!
Oeffne dich, du stille Klausen,
Denn die Ahnfrau kehrt nach Hause!”

“Now farewell! My weird is done?
Time is o'er, and rest is won.
Through this fearful closing hour,
Be Thou praised, Eternal Power!
Ope thy doors, thou tranquil dome,
The Ancestress returneth home.”

F. GRILLPARZER.

THE solitary watch of Beatrice by Arthur's bed terminated without any farther intercourse between them, but early in the forenoon Harris came to her to say that the young surgeon's report of the wound was rather more favourable, and that his master, who felt easier at present, had questioned him respecting the lady who had been with him during the night, seeming at first to fancy that the circumstance was only a dream, and on finding that it was reality

had desired him to ask if she would have the kindness to come to him.

"Did you mention my name to Mr. Bertram?" asked Beatrice, preparing to accompany him.

"I did not, Ma'am," he replied, as he ushered her into the darkened room.

Beatrice, her eyes unaccustomed to the obscurity, could distinguish nothing clearly on first approaching the bed in which Arthur lay, a little raised by pillows from his recumbent posture. To her low whisper of enquiry how he felt, the only answer he returned was by grasping her hand tightly,—and then after a moment's pause, desiring Harris to withdraw part of the curtain that shaded the window.

"And then," he added, "you may go, Harris, until I want you again."

Harris obeyed, and as the additional light entered the apartment, Arthur, drawing her closer to him, directed a long, earnest gaze upon her face; then, dropping her hand, covered his eyes with his own, and sank back with a groan of agony.

"It is,—it is!" he exclaimed. "I knew it was no one else. Beatrice! oh, Beatrice!"

"Yes, Arthur, yes, it is Beatrice!" she

said, bending over him. "Do not turn away from me. Let me try to be a comfort to you, Arthur." Her tears fell fast on his pillow.

It was long before he answered her,—save by convulsive sobs, and by taking her hand once more, and covering it with kisses. Dreading the effects of his violent agitation, she would have summoned his servant, and left him, but he so earnestly entreated her to stay, that she had not the heart to refuse; and by slow degrees he became more calm, and lay for some time silent, his eyes intently fixed upon her.

"Strange?" he at last said,—"that I should ever have doubted it! Now that sweet face is distinct before me as ever,—only so pale, so sad!—that mournful dress! How came you here, my Beatrice?"

"I am on my way to England, Arthur, with my children," she replied.

"Your children!" he exclaimed. "Oh! bring them here. Let me see your children!"

"Another time, dear Arthur, when you are better," she said; "not to-day."

"*When?*" he replied with mournful emphasis. "Tell me, Beatrice," he added after a pause;—"many things have taken place since

we parted! Your life—was it happy?—Was your ——”

“My husband, Arthur?” said Beatrice in a low voice. “Yes, he was very kind to me. I loved him dearly. I am very desolate now.”

“Thank God that it was so,” he ejaculated. “We both had our deserts. You have been avenged, Beatrice! I have met with my punishment.”

“Do not talk of that, Arthur. Do not talk of my being avenged. I wanted no vengeance.”

“There are some things,” he said, “some things that I must talk of, while I can. There is much that I want to tell you now.”

“Do not attempt it, Arthur, I entreat you. You will excite yourself, and bring on fever. Do not try to talk of the miserable past. It is forgiven, Arthur, fully, entirely. It never was otherwise.”

“Beatrice,” he said,—“you loved me once, did you not?”

“Well you know it, Arthur! Too well. It was a love that never could be forgotten,—never has been.”

“But you doubted my love for you? You must have done so. Let me speak, Beatrice;

it will be the greatest relief! Let me tell you all. I do not say that it will extenuate one of my thousand sins, but it will at least show you that you did not fling away the priceless treasure of your affection upon a wretch insensible of the blessing."

And in spite of her dissuasives to the contrary, he went on; beginning from the period of his mother's discovery of their mutual regard, and detailing all the subsequent history of his own acts of folly and guilt, which had placed it in the power of his parents to fetter him as they had done. He attempted no excuse for himself,—inculcated no one else, and owned that for the last and crowning act of madness—his declaration to Mary Adair, no palliative could be offered,—none for his subsequent offence,—none save the miserable one of his having given himself up to the ungovernable impulse of passion.

"But, Beatrice," he said, when with many intervals,—many pauses from exhaustion, he had at last brought his confession to a close,—“my heart was always yours. Wherever lower feelings might impel me, you were the object of my first, last, real love. It is vain, and worse than vain, to tell you so now. My

love brought you nothing but sorrow ; but I could not bear, wretch as I have been, that you should retain the impression which my conduct must have given you."

"Do not say it is vain to tell it me, Arthur," answered Beatrice, weeping. "All things are endurable but that one,—the thought of having given away affection that has neither been valued nor desired. Now I can once more feel that there is no shame in having loved you as I did."

During the remainder of that day and night, and the day following, Arthur continued comparatively free from pain and fever. Though too completely worn out by the excitement of the morning to converse much through the latter part of the day, he entreated Beatrice to remain beside him.

"You do not know," he said,—“the peace,—the soothing sensation it gives me to look at your face, my own Beatrice. It seems to me like that of an angel, so pure,—so calm,—so holy ! All evil thoughts fly from before it. But I fear I am selfish in asking you to stay with me ? I little—little deserve it."

"Do not say so, Arthur," she replied. "You do not know the comfort it is to me to

be of any use to you. I am happy—truly happy to remain by you.”

And she did so, with short intervals, throughout the day; and at night ere she left him, read at his request, the Psalms for the evening, and once more, kneeling by his bed, repeated the prayers of the previous night. On the following morning, at his renewed request, she brought him her children, who stood by him in that silent awe with which the hush and dimness of a sick chamber inspire the young. Arthur gazed earnestly at them.

“This boy is very like you, Beatrice!” he said.

“God bless you, dear boy, and grant that the resemblance may extend farther than your face!” He kissed the little fellow, and then drew his young sister towards him. “She too is like you. What is your name, dear child? Beatrice?—May God bless you, Beatrice!”

The little girl never forgot the embrace, which accompanied these words, or the tear which found its way to her soft young cheek, as it was pressed close to that of “the poor dear gentleman with such beautiful eyes, who said he was mamma’s old friend.” Beatrice withdrew her children; and left Arthur for a

time, as Harris had told her that he had desired him to bring writing materials, and write some letters for him which brooked no longer delay. The man obeyed, though trembling for the consequences. He became still more uneasy when he found that one of them was to be addressed to his master's London solicitor, desiring that legal proceedings against his faithless wife should immediately be instituted. The other was to a friend in Venice, an English gentleman; on the subject of various arrangements which he was requested, as a matter of kindness, to undertake, regarding the transmission to himself of the personal effects which he had left there,—the dismissal of servants, etc., and the collecting and despatching to Lady Mountjoye, of what should be found belonging to her. The letters were concluded, but the state of agitation and excitement into which the recollections aroused by the last named one, threw the injured husband, was productive of the most disastrous effects. As evening approached, he became very ill, and before night he was in a high fever, and delirious.

For three days and nights after this, Beatrice scarcely for a quarter of an hour at a

time quitted the bed-side of Arthur. Though insisting on his own servant accepting the occasional relief of an exchange with her's, she herself could not bear to leave the sufferer. He clung to her presence; her voice would calm his wildest paroxysms; her hand, pressed to his throbbing temples, seemed to cool the fire that scorched them; her arm, supporting and raising him, alleviated the restlessness of fever. He always appeared to recognise her; and repeatedly was her heart wrung by some allusion which he would make in his wanderings, to their early days of love and happiness, shewing how indelibly their memory was imprinted on his heart. Meanwhile, all her own unforgotten, though buried affection, all the deep tenderness of her nature, was revived by Arthur's sufferings, his helplessness, and his dependence upon her; and she felt wretched if compelled to be any time away from him. The attentions of the young French surgeon during this period, were unremitting; and Harris, who had had considerable experience, felt satisfied that all which skill and care could do, was done for his master. But it was manifest to him, even after the violence of this attack was completely subdued, that no

ground was gained. The wound in the shoulder did not close. It continued inflamed and very painful, and a state of low fever was thus kept up in the system, which no preventive measures seemed to reach; and which occasioned a wasting of strength that began to assume a very serious aspect. The life which Arthur had led,—one of strong excitement,—too often of excess,—which, although it had never sunk to the depth of actual degradation, had been in the highest degree pernicious to a frame and temperament so excitable as his, had aggravated his constitutional tendency to fever; and the state of his health during the previous winter had been such as would have caused him to fall an easy victim to a mischief much less serious than the present. He had in fact, as his servant told Beatrice, arisen from the bed of serious indisposition to pursue his faithless wife and her seducer; and it was only the energy of fever which had sustained him during the headlong journey. This false excitement had now disappeared. His mind was calmer, clearer, more acute on all points than it had been since the beginning of that illness; but there was a sinking in his bodily frame which daily became more painfully evident to

Harris; who now began, in intense anxiety, to count the days until it was possible for Sir Thomas to be with his son; and to reflect with dismay, that even supposing him to set off instantly on receipt of the letter, for another fortnight it was hopeless to expect him.

It was the evening of the tenth day from Arthur's arrival at Mittiwald; a gloriously warm and bright one; and weary of bed, he had been laid upon a couch which had been contrived near the window of his room, looking out upon the lovely valley of the Eisach. Here, wrapped in his dressing-gown, and his head resting on the shoulder of Beatrice, who sat by supporting him, he lay for a while gazing in silence on the exquisite scene without, then, as if fatigued, closed his eyes with a sigh.

"You are tired and faint, dearest Arthur," said Beatrice. "Should you like to be moved to bed again."

"No," he answered, "I am not tired. But you are, my beloved. I have given you so much fatigue and trouble!"

"Do not talk so, Arthur," she gently answered. "You know how it grieves me."

"I will not then," he said; "and it will

not be for long now. The sands are nearly run out."

"My Arthur! oh! do not dream of such things! Please God, you will recover, and take warning by the mournful past. Please God, you will live long, to serve Him better than you have done."

"No, Beatrice, my time is out. I feel it. It is no imagination. I feel my life ebbing away. I have lived it all, and lived it fast, and it is escaping from me now, that my eyes are opened to its guilt and weakness. I am not to be permitted any time to retrieve my misdeeds. It has been one long mistake,—a life of lofty aims,—once, long ago, it was! and of defeated purposes. Should you, Beatrice, in our old happy days, ever have anticipated what my end would be?"

Beatrice could not answer; she was weeping silently. Well she remembered these days, and the agony of recalling them now was too much even for her quiet fortitude.

"It may be so ordered in mercy," he added. "I have sinned against light and knowledge, in despite of the love of an angel, and the counsels and prayers of one who is now a saint in Paradise.

What cause have I to dream that the Future would be better than the Past? There is no safety save in death, for one like me. My own Beatrice! do not weep so bitterly. Let it be a consolation to you through after years—and God send you many of peace, if not of happiness—that you have been a ministering spirit of love and mercy in this hour of utmost need, to him who must otherwise have gone to a grave of darkness and despair.”

Struggling to restrain her sobs, Beatrice pressed her lips to his forehead. “Arthur,” she at last found voice to say, “We are left to ourselves, cast upon our own prayers alone; and we know that we have an ever-present, ever-hearing God and Saviour to whom to pray; but oh! that He had been pleased in mercy to send one of His especial ministers to our aid in this hour—too truly of utmost need! My Arthur! have you found peace? Have you sought it in penitence?”

“I have tried to seek it, Beatrice,” he answered in a low and faltering voice,—“but my soul is very dark; my heart fails me in gazing into the unknown state which I am so rapidly approaching. My sins lie heavy on my

conscience. Pray with me, Beatrice! I love to hear it. And pray for me, dearest! for I sorely need your prayers."

Beatrice did pray with him, as she was wont to do night and morning, and often through the long day of suffering, as he had strength to bear it. And long, long that night, ere she lay down to her short and interrupted rest, broken by repeated visits to the door of his room, to listen if there were any sound within,—long and fervently did she pour forth her supplications for Arthur;—supplications which received an immediate and strangely unlooked-for answer.

While Meta was assisting her to dress on the following morning, she informed her mistress that a party of travellers had arrived the previous evening, from the German side; and that one of them, a *Pfarrer*, from his dress and mien, walking out in the garden, had met her there with the children; and seeming struck with their appearance, had stopped to speak to them, in English; had been much moved on hearing the name of their mother, and when told that she was engaged at that time in the sick-room of a friend, had informed Meta that he hoped to be permitted to have an interview with her in the morning. Her friend, Mr.

Grant, was the person whose name immediately occurred to Beatrice on hearing this, although she had supposed that he was long since settled at home; and catching with gratitude at the idea of meeting with a clergyman, she sent Meta to request that the stranger would speak with her as soon after breakfast as the *saal* should be comparatively unoccupied.

On entering that apartment, accordingly, when informed that this was the case, Beatrice perceived the person she came to meet standing by one of the windows, with his back towards her; but a glance sufficed to show that he was a much older man than Mr. Grant; and she paused in some perplexity; when the stranger, turning round and perceiving her, advanced with both hands extended. For a moment Beatrice stood speechless, confused by the sight of grey, nearly white, hair, and a countenance so much more aged than her recollections pictured it; then, with an electric shock, as it were, of recognition, sprang forward to grasp the hands of—Mr. Carmichael!

The rush of painful and agitating recollections, on both sides, rendered speech for some time impossible to either. But at last Beatrice recovered her composure sufficiently to inquire

how it happened that her old friend and she were brought together in this unlikely place? The reply filled her with wonder, thankfulness, and awe, in considering the mysterious workings of God's Providence. Mr. Carmichael informed her that some three or four years after he had quitted the Church of Scotland, his eyes had gradually become opened to the tendency of the opinions which had induced him to do so. He looked back, he said, on Edward Irving, he regarded most of his living followers, as men of the holiest lives and most devoted piety; but he perceived that their ideal cast of mind, and internal dissatisfaction with the Communion to which they belonged,—their perception, in short, of the ultimate tendencies of Calvinism in doctrine and Church-polity, had betrayed them into wild, unprofitable, and irreverent mysticism; to which, when the human mind has once yielded up its reasoning faculties, it is impossible to guess the depths of error into which it may be betrayed. He had, he said, become warned in time; and in humiliation, prayer, and penitence, had retraced his steps. He was now an ordained minister of the Church of England,—in whose holy bosom his long-troubled, long-dissatisfied spirit had

found, at last, the rest and sure anchor of confidence after which it had toiled and aspired in vain for years. And the remainder of a life so largely tinctured with error, and so darkened by the recollection of having aided to bewilder the minds of others, he wished to dedicate entirely to the service of God. He had obtained an appointment to one of the Church's most distant Indian missions; and in the course of a couple of months meant to embark at Trieste, for the over-land route, then recently established. The interval he destined to be spent in the Tyrol and the North of Italy. He had arrived at Mittiwald in company with several travellers, with whom he had made the voyage down the Rhine; but here they were to part, for his chance companions were bound direct for Italy, and he wished to remain a little while where he was.

"This place," he said, "is endeared to me by one of the brightest and most precious recollections of my past life; for here, two-and-twenty years ago, I spent some time in making excursions among the mountains, with my beloved friend William Bertram, then a boy of seventeen; a creature of such promise,—so every way engaging, as is seldom to be met

with. His spirit will seem to walk by my side in the scenes which we have so frequently traversed together. And in the intense longing which possessed me to pass the last days of my European existence here, I trace the finger of a manifest Providence; since it has enabled me to meet once more with one whose image has never departed from my—memory, and never will while life endures.”

“There is more cause to say so than you now guess,” said Beatrice, solemnly. “The hand of God, dear Mr. Carmichael, has led you hither at this moment. You have work to do of which you little dreamt when you yielded to your wish of coming.”

Words were vain to describe the awe-struck amazement, the grief, the horror, with which Mr. Carmichael heard the tale she now unfolded. And when, some time after their interview was over, and Arthur, who appeared somewhat stronger that day, had been prepared to see him, he was ushered into the sick-chamber, his firmness, tried as it was, completely deserted him. As he approached, and beheld his beloved pupil,—the lovely and attractive boy,—the beautiful youth,—the fascinating and accomplished man,—who through all his sins and

follies had preserved his early hold upon the heart of his preceptor, extended on his bed,—pale, wasted, and feeble; as he looked on him, supported by her whose devoted affection he had so cruelly requited, now brought in her lonely widowhood to tend the dying couch of her first love;—and thought of the cause in which he had fallen,—the blight of his manhood,—the ruined hopes of his family,—Mr. Carmichael's fortitude gave way. He returned in silence the pressure of Arthur's emaciated hand, and sinking into a chair, hid his face, and sobbed audibly. But a fervent internal prayer for strength, enabled him in a few minutes to conquer his emotion, and speak with calmness to the sufferer. And from that hour the presence of this devoted servant of his Heavenly Master became a blessing to whose value no words could do justice. Day by day, as the dying man slowly but surely drew nearer to the dark portals of the Eternal world,—under the blessing of God upon the counsels, the exhortations, and the prayers of His minister, the shadows of hopelessness and self-upbraiding despair cleared off his soul; and Beatrice, in devout gratitude, compared to which that she might have felt in watching his return to

health, and strength, and prolonged days on earth, would have been faint and weak, noted the gradual restoration of his Maker's darkened image in his heart, and on her knees returned thanks that Arthur was indeed a penitent.

It was near the end of the second week since Mr. Carmichael's arrival at Mittiwald, and an evening of glorious beauty and warmth. For the last two days, Arthur had been very ill. His weakness had been extreme, and he had been seized with repeated fainting-fits, but this afternoon he had rallied considerably, and desired to be moved to the temporary sofa near the window. This was done; and at his request, Beatrice again brought him her children, who had repeatedly been his visitors during his illness. She did not permit them to remain long, and it struck her that his manner of taking leave of them was even more than usually full of tender solemnity. That it must have been so, she was subsequently convinced by the impression which it made on the children themselves, who repeatedly, and long afterwards, recurred to it. She quitted the room with them, and Arthur was left alone with Mr. Carmichael, who sat in mournful silence by the head of his couch.

“Dear Carmichael,” said Arthur to him after a few minutes pause, “it is my impression that I shall not live to see my father, and there are various directions that I should have wished to give. Will you, who have been so strangely mingled in the closing scenes of all our doomed race, do me this service, and write down what I want to say to him?”

Mr. Carmichael at once assented; and placing himself, with writing materials, close by Arthur, took down his last instructions; which were brief, but minute, and comprehended an ample provision for his faithful servant Harris, and tokens of remembrance to his parents, his sister, and many personal friends. Amongst other things, a number of books, which he particularized, were directed to be given to the children of Beatrice Sumner, as memorials of their mother’s friend; and there was a miniature picture of himself, which had been painted for his faithless wife before their marriage, and which he believed would be found amongst the jewels she had not taken with her from home. If so found, it was ordered to be sent to Beatrice.

“There are many of my books, Carmichael,” he said, when the list was concluded, “of which

I should have wished to request your acceptance, in remembrance of me ; but you are going away, which will render it difficult. Let me name them ; and they can be retained till you return, or send for them."

"I shall not return ;" said Mr. Carmichael. "I require no memorial of you, Arthur. Do not suppose that I am likely to forget you."

"Wear this, then, for my sake and that of another better worth remembering," said Arthur, taking from one of his fingers a seal-ring containing his brother William's hair in the inside. "It has never left my hand till now ; but it is time it did, for it has dropped off repeatedly of late. You will remember this night at Mittiwald when you look at it, as well as the old days at Kingsconnell."

"I shall remember them indeed," said Mr. Carmichael in a half-stifled voice, as he transferred the ring from the wasted hand which held it, to his own. Oh ! Arthur, Arthur ! has it come to this ?"

"Yes, dear friend, to this it has come ;" replied Arthur. "This violent death in a foreign land,—this blighted existence, and dishonoured marriage-bed,—this memory stained with sin and excess ;—this is the end of the

promise of my youth, its ardent hopes, its bright aspirations; of your instructions, and of the love and prayers of my sainted brother."

"But yet not the end, Arthur. Look up,—up to the Cross, and beyond the grave. You have been enabled to do so?"

"Yes, thanks be to God, and you, and that angel of mercy; I have, Carmichael. But there are dark hours still, when such a flood of torturing recollections comes across me, that my very soul gives way beneath the agony of remorse. It is strange," he pursued after a few minutes' silence,—“strange what vivid pictures of distant objects rise before one in sickness,—in the silence and darkness of the night! Last night I had such a distinct vision—not a dream,—for I was not asleep,—of that picture at Kingsconnell,—that fated picture—my likeness!"

Mr. Carmichael felt a cold shiver come over him, but he was silent; and Arthur went on, in a low dreamy tone. — “And then I seemed to be standing on the site of the old burial-ground of Kirk Ringan's. I saw the trees, with their rich heavy foliage, as plainly as I see yonder rocks and mountains at this moment. It was a warning of my approach-

ing end, no doubt, Carmichael. The doom of the Bertrams is well-nigh accomplished now. My poor, poor father! my mother! my poor Emily!"

"God help them, indeed!" ejaculated Mr. Carmichael.

"And you, who have been with my father through all those former hours,—who brought him the tidings of Hugh's untimely fate, and stood by William's blessed death-bed—you will again be beside him, now that the cup is full. Could I but dare to hope that your ministrations might afford him the comfort they have done me, I should anticipate his sufferings with less dread than I do."

"The grace of God is all-sufficient," said Mr. Carmichael. "To Him we must commit it."

On the following day, Mr. Carmichael administered the Holy Communion to Arthur. Beatrice, with her maid, who was a Protestant, and his own servant, partook with him of the blessed rite. After it was over he sunk into a calm sleep, which lasted till near evening. Beatrice, who had watched by him during his slumber, remained with him still. He did not ask to be removed from his bed that evening,

but lay, propped up by pillows, his eyes fixed on her face, and her hand clasped in his. But few words passed between them,—till the night began to fall; and Harris brought lights into the room.

“Beatrice, dearest!” said Arthur, and the tone of his voice sounded hollow and changed, “Beatrice, will you remain with me? Will you not leave me to-night? Carmichael, will you too stay here?”

Both assured him that they would. “It will be your last night’s watch, my Beatrice;” he added. “May you be blessed for all your love and tenderness!”

He was again for a considerable time silent; and Beatrice, through the slowly-gathering tears which dimmed her eyes, sat gazing on him, and noting the alteration in his face since first she had watched him on that very spot. The lines of trouble,—the dark, sad, restless expression which then had dimmed its beauty, were gone; and in his dying hour the countenance of Arthur had regained the expression of his early and happy days,—only pervaded by a calm, a repose, which recalled the angelic looks of William, when his end drew near. The same resemblance struck Mr. Carmichael,

who felt it to be a token that the spirit was hovering on the verge of its release. But neither of them uttered a word, till Arthur spoke again.

"Beatrice," he said, "I dreamt a little while ago of the Kingsconnell woods,—and our old seat beneath the lime-tree. You will revisit it, dearest, when you return home, and think of me?"

"Yes, Arthur," she replied, "then and ever."

"Then, my beloved,—we shall be indeed united. Then my errors will be remembered with forgiveness alone. Carmichael!" His friend drew near, and he fervently blessed and thanked him for all his kindness. "Let the remembrance of this hour," he said, "be a precious thought to look back upon when your own time shall come, dear friend! Is Harris here?"

"Here, my beloved master!" said his servant, approaching him and weeping bitterly. Arthur, holding out his hand to him, bade him a solemn and affectionate farewell. "One thing more," he said, after a brief silence. "Carmichael, tell my father that if *she* ever care to hear it, I forgave her on my death-bed, as I

trust to be forgiven. I have too often wronged her. Beatrice, dearest, come close to me. I do not see you clearly."

"I am here, beloved!" whispered she, pressing her lips upon his cheek. "Arthur! are you at peace?"

"At peace,—perfect peace,—in my Redeemer!" he replied in a low distinct voice—"there is no more darkness now."

"Let us pray!" said Mr. Carmichael. And kneeling by the bed, he offered up the commendatory Prayer for the Departing. Then, in solemn stillness, they stood by and watched the last ebbing of the tide of life; the slow sinking,—light and consciousness fading from the eyes,—the faint gasping breath,—the last awful sound that precedes dissolution,—the momentary struggle,—the settling down upon the inanimate countenance of the final "rapture of repose."

"Oh Lord! we thank Thee!" ejaculated Mr. Carmichael. "The soul of Thy penitent servant hath entered into Thy rest!"

On the following evening Beatrice was kneeling in prayer by that now quiet bed where she had watched so long. To say that

her agonising tears had flowed, that her heart lay crushed and bleeding,—under the first bitterness of this bereavement,—were only to say that she was a woman, mourning for him who had been the lover of her youth. But all this agony she knew would have its day, and the gratitude remain behind; the thankfulness for that mercy which even at the eleventh hour had saved him. Nor even in the first depth of her affliction would she have recalled him to life. He was better, happier,—where sin and temptation could cross his path no more. And from her inmost soul she acknowledged the deep truth which these words convey,—

“He bides with us who dies;—he is but lost who lives.”

A gulf through life had been fixed between them, but death had bridged it over.

Absorbed in thoughts like these, and in fervent devotion, Beatrice had been unconscious of a sudden noise which had invaded the unwonted silence of the inn. A long time had elapsed, there had been a loud wild cry uttered, which startled her for a moment, and then passed from her recollection. At last, the shadows of evening were rapidly falling

from the mountains, and she arose from her knees; and with a memory of the previous evening at that very hour swelling at her heart, bent over the silent form upon the bed, —withdrew the covering, and imprinted kiss after kiss upon the cold cheek. At that moment the door was slowly, reverently opened, and preceded by Mr. Carmichael, with a light, there entered two figures, a lady and a gentleman. Beatrice turned from the bed, and beheld the parents of Arthur!—

Thus by the corpse of their last surviving son, the victim of their ambition, did the unhappy father and mother once more look upon the face of her whose love might have been his safeguard. Thus were the transgressors filled with their own ways; and thus, by working out his own pleasure, did the last male descendant of Randolph Lord Kingsconnell live to witness the full completion of the Widow's Curse.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far
below her;

Dark no longer, but all illumined with love; and the pathway
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and far in the
distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she beheld him.
Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it was not.

* * * * *

Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had taught her.
So was her love diffused, but like to some odorous spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with aroma.
Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to follow
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her Saviour.”

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

FIVE years had elapsed since the remains of
Arthur Bertram had been brought from the
foreign land where he died, to repose beside
his brothers; five dreary years.

“For life may long be borne
Ere sorrow break her chain.”

But at last it gave way. Sir Thomas Bertram died, older in heart than in years; a broken down, world-weary man; and on a bright May morning in the year 1845, the family vault in Kingsconnell churchyard was once more opened, to receive the last of the Bertrams.

A prodigious concourse of people attended the funeral, many of whom had been present at that of Sir Peter Bertram, five and twenty years ago; and there once more was Mr. Hamilton, now proprietor of Kingsconnell, to discharge the duty of chief mourner. He had been a young man when last he filled that office; and though now no longer so, was still in the vigour of middle age. Many of the country people who had, as usual, assembled to witness the ceremonial, well recollected his former appearance amongst them. The forefathers of the hamlet, who had on that occasion sighed and foreboded evil from the "uncanny" circumstance, now slumbered peacefully beneath the church-yard sod; but those who had been young men at that time were many of them the seniors of the assembled groups, who looked on in awe-struck silence; or shook their heads, and exchanged shuddering reminiscences

of Haverel Patie's memorable speech that day, and again upon the occasion of Hugh Bertram's funeral. The *natural* himself, now a decrepit object, and as usual in cases like his, much weaker in mind in proportion to his premature bodily decay, was likewise in presence, seated on the low wall of the church-yard, mopping and mowing, and pointing with significant gestures to the procession, as the long train of mourners slowly defiled along the pathway to the open vault. There were few indeed, if any, amongst the rational spectators, who experienced any feeling but that of sorrow, at this final extinction of the race who had come amongst them so recently, and with such apparent promise of long life and direct succession. The Bertrams had been universal favourites with the common people. Like many persons of haughty temper, Sir Thomas and his lady, who would have coldly repelled the advances of those in a rank beneath, yet touching upon, their own, had been remarkable for kindness to their decided inferiors and to the poor. No family were more honoured by their servants, or looked up to by their dependants. And the young people were beloved by high and low. Many a weeping woman in the

Clachan that evening recalled the departed glories of the parish, in "Maister Carmichael's time," the golden age at Kingsconnell, as it was now considered, when on a Sunday in the summer, the Kingsconnell loft was wont to be occupied by Sir Thomas, his stately lady, and his beautiful family. The grace and sweetness of William,—the bright, glad, animated beauty of Arthur, the boyish attractiveness of Hugh, the elegance and loveliness of Emily, were fondly recalled, as those things are, which have passed away for ever. Never more would those bright young faces and graceful forms be visible there. The father and his sons were laid in the dismal vault, which was all that now remained to them of their rich inheritance; the daughter was far removed,—the mother about to depart, in her widowhood, from the mansion which was no more her own. To the honour of human nature be it said, that although there were not a few disposed to worship the rising sun in the person of the new lord of Kingsconnell, the predominant feeling was that of an amount of regret for the Bertrams, which almost led to an unreasonable grudge against him who seemed to have usurped their place.

For some time after Lady Bertram's departure, which took place in the month of June, the house of Kingsconnell remained empty; and then a sale was announced of all the furniture and effects it contained which were not heir-loom. Everything of the kind had been left to Lady Bertram, who being about to take up her permanent abode in the South of England, for the sake of living near her daughter, and probably connecting few but painful reminiscences with the furniture of Kingsconnell, preferred selling to removing any of it, with the exceptions of the library, articles of virtue and bijouterie, and so forth. This sale, which was fixed for the early part of August, once over, it was understood that the mansion-house was to return for some years to its pristine state of emptiness and desolation, as Mr. Hamilton, whose own private affairs had at the period of his succession to the estate, been in a very embarrassed condition, meant to economise with his family for some years upon the Continent, ere incurring the many expenses attendant upon settling there. A large concourse of people was expected to attend the sale, so intense were the curiosity and interest attaching to the romantic family history; which,

formerly confined to the knowledge of a few aged chroniclers of the past, had latterly been revived, and talked of far and wide; and so strong was the desire on the parts of many to procure some relics of those who had appeared amongst them, and occupied so conspicuous a place in the public eye for a time, and then departed, as it seemed, like shadows. For three days of the week prior to the sale, the mansion was thrown open to public inspection, and it was upon the third of these days, when it was supposed that the rush of visitors would be somewhat abated, that at an early hour in the forenoon, Mrs. George Sempill was on her way thither, accompanied by a friend who had come to stay with her and her brother-in-law. This was a gentleman far past middle-age, yet full of bodily and mental vigour, only mellowed, not impaired, by time, and the most remarkable feature in whose fine and benevolent countenance was a pair of eyes of singularly penetrating expression, which, when fixed on any one, seemed almost to look him through. This stranger, whom our readers will recognise as their old acquaintance, Mr. Ingram, had become intimately known to Helen during the last winter of her residence in Madeira, whither he

had been drawn from his seclusion to accompany the widow of a younger brother, in the vain hope of restoring health to her only daughter. Miss Ingram Thoresby died there; but she had lived long enough to become much attached to Mrs. George Sempill, whose unwearied kindness, indeed, attracted the affections of the whole party. Her uncle, after many promises to visit Sempilltower, had at this long distance of time, been first induced to do so, and had only recently arrived.

"I am glad," said Mrs. Sempill as the carriage, containing her and Mr. Ingram, drove from the gateway, "to be able to show you Kingsconnell, Mr. Ingram, whilst the house is still in the condition in which the last owners left it, especially as you felt so keen an interest in one of them."

"Yes," replied Mr. Ingram, "I watched the beginning of that mournful drama, whose end, indeed, I little foreboded! I noted its progress, and was present at what is usually considered the *dénoûement*, the wedding. A brilliant scene it was! but even then, all did not appear so cloudless in the horizon to me as it did to most of the spectators. I have always been one of the quiet lookers-on, you know, Mrs. Sem-

pill, who see much which escapes the players at the great game of life. But loath indeed should I have been to anticipate conduct so flagitious on the part of my old friend's daughter!"

"Can you tell me anything about Lady Mountjoye?" asked Helen. "I ought to say the Duchess of Templeford."

"Nothing," he answered, "but that she is the gayest of the gay in Paris, Vienna, Rome, —wherever there is dissipation, in short, to be met with on the Continent. The Duke and she are frequently at home too, at one or other of his seats; sometimes, but less frequently at Milldenhanger; for there, in her native county, public opinion is so decidedly against her, that she is shunned universally. It is a woful position for a man of high rank, talents, accomplishments,—a man at this moment under thirty; when he ought to have all the world before him! Banished from the Court of his Sovereign, feeling and perceiving his wife to be avoided by the pure in character of her own sex, and with the awful guilt of murder upon his soul!—For such it is in the eye of God, though the law acquitted him in consideration of the circumstances attending the duel.—A dreadful position!—and he feels it!"

"Dreadful indeed!" echoed Helen. "I suppose they are not happy together?"

"Anything but happy. How should they? The Duke's is the situation that renders a man reckless and desperate, in order to drown remorse. I believe him to be a man of so much natural good feeling, that had the partner of his guilt shared in his repentance, and been willing to devote herself to a life of comparative seclusion, as the best atonement she could make to society, he would have studied her happiness, and so have found consolation, though not forgetfulness; but she is so far from any thought of the kind, that she continues to pursue the same career with unabated zest. She is followed, worshipped, by men wherever she goes; and she knows her power, and uses it to the uttermost. I have no doubt her present husband experiences, by a righteous retribution, not a few of the sufferings he assisted her to inflict upon her first. He is a miserable man."

"Certainly," said Helen, "her fascination was extraordinary; and she was very beautiful."

"And still is, I understand; for it is long

since I have seen her. The most youthful looking creature of her age possible, only upon a larger scale now than of old. She has been a fatal beauty to many—many in her day! Almost in the very beginning of her career she bewitched a young man of high promise, Sir Philip Chester, who was previously attached to a very lovely girl in our neighbourhood. Well do I recollect it! for it was at the same period that her toils began to close round young Bertram. I was then at the house.”

“And Sir Philip Chester? What became of him?”

“He never get over it. She turned his brain, uprooted his purposes,—rendered him unsettled,—fascinated him in short. He dangled after her in the country, and for a whole season in London, and then was cast off for a new adorer. He has long been a dissipated, seared, *blasé* man of the world,—all the good of his nature burnt out of him in that fatal passion. And poor Amy Vernon has rested well these many long years in the Protestant cemetery at Florence. They took her to Italy to cure her broken heart. This is only one instance out of many that I know of Lady Mountjoye’s

fatal power. I think there was no sadder one than her first husband. You knew him, did you not, Mrs. Sempill?"

"Not intimately," said Helen, "nor until after his marriage at all. I lived so long abroad."

"He was a young man originally destined for a different life, and a different death! Among the many sad recollections with which a long life becomes stored, Mrs. Sempill, I have none sadder, belonging to those unconnected with me by ties of blood, than that of Mr. Bertram. He was a being whom to know, and not to like, was impossible; and the more I knew of him, before and after his marriage, as a neighbour in the country, the more I did like him and mourn over him. His appearances in Parliament alone showed of what he was capable; and they were few indeed, and insulated, compared to what they ought to have been. There was something in him that always puzzled and baffled me. Perhaps you can assist me to solve the mystery."

"What was it, and I shall try?" said Helen.

"It struck me," answered Mr. Ingram, "that his heart had been pre-occupied, and

that he was in a manner led into his admiration for Mary Adair, contrary to his inner self. And this impression never left me during all our subsequent intercourse; but I never could discover any clue to guide me right in the matter. Can you give me one? Do you know anything of his early life?"

"So far," replied Helen, "that I believe your conjecture to have been perfectly correct, and that he was most unhappy in consequence of his own weakness and want of principle. But I scarcely feel at liberty to mention names."

They had now reached the grand entrance to Kingsconnell, and the deep shade of the avenue offered so agreeable a contrast to the heat and dust of the high road, that Mrs. Sempill and her companion, by mutual consent, alighted, in order to walk slowly up, sending the carriage to the stables.

"Poor Bertram!" exclaimed the old gentleman, as they stood gazing up the long vista, terminated by the mansion. "His was a woful death! And you tell me your niece Mrs. Sumner, happened accidentally to be in the house at the time? I must ask her some particulars of his last days. Poor Bertram!

Do you know, Mrs. Sempill, he added after a pause, that niece of your's greatly interests me. I have seldom seen a face more attractive. There is an expression of repose in it, so unusual in the modern world ;—such a contrast to the eager, restless aspect which one constantly encounters. She looks to me like a person resting after great sorrow. Is it so ?”

“Poor Beatrice !” answered Mrs. Sempill with a sigh. “Yes, she has suffered a great deal in the course of her life ; and she feels the desolation of widowhood very acutely.”

“I observed that she was dressed in black. She has never laid it aside, I suppose ?”

“Never, and does not intend to do so. Not, as she told me when I remonstrated with her on the subject, (thinking her too young to be doomed to perpetual mourning),—not from any desire to make a display of grief, which has long since given place to calm resignation, and even cheerfulness ; but that she feels that the tendency of the sorrows she has encountered has been to set her apart from life ; and that her dress, in its unchangeable colour, merely reflects this feeling.”

“She looks set apart,—purified, exalted !” said the old gentleman in a tone of enthusiasm.

“ And yet withal, full of the warm sympathies with others that great sorrow sometimes unhappily dulls.”

“ You have precisely devined her character, Mr. Ingram, as I perceive you never fail to do with every one’s. I do indeed know few to be compared to Beatrice. A creature of great talent—by nature full of impetuous feeling,—the discipline of life has tamed, calmed, sanctified her, in short, by God’s blessing upon it; yet left her warm heart and kindly sympathies unchilled. She lives for others. I scarcely think she has a thought of self. You could hardly imagine the amount of good she does, or the quiet, unostentatious self-denial, which one merely discovers by accident, by which her life is characterised. Her home duties are her first care; and her leisure she devotes to works of mercy. In that respect she has, as all we Episcopalians in this neighbourhood have, much cause for gratitude with regard to the clergyman by whose advice and direction all her good works are conducted.”

“ Your clergyman resides at some little distance, does he not?”

“ At the town of St. Michael’s, nearly four miles off. Some years ago, our former one,

Mr. Malcolm, a saintly old man, died ; and he has been succeeded by Mr. Grant, a young man belonging to one of our ancient Scottish families who have always been stanch adherents to the Church. Mr. Grant might have had excellent preferment in England, but his devotion to the Church in Scotland is such, that he remains by choice to minister within her pale. His zeal, energy, and devotedness have effected wonders in the short space that he has held the charge at St. Michael's. He has filled the church to a degree hitherto unknown ; and has actually, with the Bishop's consent, restored the Daily Service ! And if you knew the low ebb to which the Church in the southern parts of Scotland had sunk, under the years of oppression which bore her down, you would be better able to appreciate the influence of the clergyman who has been able to effect that, than you can now be."

"How fortunate to be within easy reach of such a clergyman !" said Mr. Ingram. "Mrs. Sumner is also in his neighbourhood. She lives close to you, does she not ? You must take me to call upon her."

"I shall be delighted. We shall go to-morrow. Yes, we are very near neighbours.

She now occupies the house where her own and her sister's girlhood passed, the Grange. She is her uncle's tenant there; and has been since the summer after her return home. And for the last three years, she has had the comfort of her father's society. Admiral Lockhart was left a widower about that time, by the death of his second wife, without children. She did not make his home comfortable, and he appears a different being since he lost her. He is so happy with Beatrice and his grand-children."

"She has only those two children, I think you said, who accompanied her to Sempilltower yesterday? The little girl is a sweet pretty creature; but I was much struck by the looks of the boy. He is very like his mother."

"He is like her in every way. Only with more of the calm and gentleness of his father's temper, than with the vivid impetuosity of her's, at his age. But he has all her rare abilities. A very dear boy he is, and devoted to his mother."

"A mother such as you describe her," said Mr. Ingram, "is the most invaluable blessing that can be granted to a boy. With sweetness and tenderness to win his heart, and with talent and acquirement to give her an influence

over his mind,—she is a treasure beyond price to him.”

“Beatrice has often said to me,” returned Mrs. Sempill, “that as her boy has sustained the irreparable misfortune of losing his father’s guidance, she cannot feel sufficiently grateful to God for the discipline which seems to have peculiarly qualified her for the double duty she has to fulfil towards him. I trust he may live to repay her devoted care and affection.”

“His education is intended to be for the Church, he told me,” said Mr. Ingram.

“Yes, it was his own wish, and I need not add that it is his mother’s. She is following out the plan his father had formed for him. He is at present at Rugby ; and thence will go to a private tutor’s to prepare for the University. Little Beatrice is her mother’s pupil entirely ; only she has the advantage of masters when they go to visit the Walter Sempills, our young people, in Edinburgh ; or when Mrs. Sumner takes her children on their annual visit to her mother-in-law. She generally does so about Easter, so as to meet Edward there for his holidays, and the Admiral either goes to London for a peep of his old friends at his

club, or stays with his daughter Helen in Edinburgh, during their absence."

"I am sorry your younger niece and her husband are not with you just now. I should have liked to have seen them."

"I am quite grieved too that they are not. Helen is a charming creature, and her husband not less so. They are on a visit to his mother at present. We expect them in a month. It is a great comfort to Beatrice and Helen to have been thus brought near each other again, after ten years' separation. They are such truly-attached sisters. And to me the blessing of regaining those who are dear to me as children of my own, is one for which I cannot feel too grateful."

"We shall meet Mrs. Sumner here to-day, she told me," said Mr. Ingram, as they reached the open iron gates of Kingsconnell.

"Yes," she said she meant to come to-day, to pay one more visit to the Kingsconnell of her early recollections ; and to fix upon various articles which she wishes her father to purchase for her at the sale, as memorials of the house."

They now entered the parterre in front of the mansion, which already began to bear

traces of the disarray incident to its present altered circumstances, contrasting mournfully with its former exquisite order. The flower-beds were trodden and defaced by the numbers of feet which had passed and repassed there within the last two days; the hall door stood wide open, beneath the portico still surmounted by the heraldic achievement of the last Bertram of Kingsconnell; and the stately hall had its tessellated pavement soiled from the same cause with the trampled flower-beds. Various persons, of mien very little accordant with the style of the house, lounged familiarly in and out of the door, or passed and repassed on the stair-case, for though the great influx, alike of county visitors and the denizens of St. Michael's and of Gatesford, was over, there were still stragglers from both places, as well as persons of a higher grade, occupied on the present occasion in gratifying their curiosity respecting the details of the house, or in arranging what purchases they should make when the sale began.

Mr. Ingram was standing with Mrs. Sempill in the centre of the hall, admiring its height and proportions, when they were accosted by a party which came upon them from one of the

side doors opening into it. "How are you, Helen, my dear?" said a tall, stout, and fine looking elderly man, with white hair, and an open, cheerful countenance, quitting a short, fat, comely old lady, in a blue silk bonnet, who leant upon his arm, to seize Mrs. Sempill by both her hands, with a warmth of salutation which would evidently have been an embrace, in a less public situation.

"Thank you, Harry, quite well," she replied; at the same time introducing Admiral and Miss Grace Lockhart to her friend.

"Where is Beatrice?" enquired Mrs. Sempill of Miss Grace, while the Admiral entered into conversation with Mr. Ingram, and they proceeded up the stair-case together.

"She asked us to allow her to go over the house by herself," whispered Miss Grace, with a significant shake of the head. "Poor dear! it's very trying for her to come here at all, you know, Mrs. George. And yet I saw she wished it too. She wrote and asked me to join the party, knowing that I had a great desire to see Kingsconnell again; and I came over yesterday."

"Do you make any stay at the Grange, Miss Grace," asked Helen.

“Not just now. I’m always coming and going, you know, but I can’t remain at present. Harry and the children have promised to drive home with me to-night after tea. I dare say Beatrice will be glad of a quiet evening alone, after a visit like this to-day. Dear me! dear me! here we are at the ante-drawing-room. Couldn’t one just fancy —— but you were not here, my dear? I declare to you, I could just fancy I saw the room as it was that night of the first ball here, on Miss Bertram’s birthday, when I came with Beatrice and Helen, poor lambs! There they all stood,—Sir Thomas and his lady—and Miss Bertram, and Arthur, and Hugh. I could imagine I saw them now. Such a group! And to think of the end of all!”

Some little time after this, Helen and Mr. Ingram, having gone on in advance of the Admiral and his slow moving train, found themselves in the library, where there was not at present any one else. The books had been removed from this apartment, but the pictures of course remained; and after glancing at the others, they came opposite to that of the Master of Kingsconnell.

“Who is this?” exclaimed Mr. Ingram.
“Good heavens! what a likeness!”

Helen explained the origin, without entering into the singular history of the picture; and Mr. Ingram remained for some time absorbed in wonder at its extraordinary resemblance to Arthur Bertram, and in melancholy reminiscences of that gifted and misguided being.

“Put me in mind, Mr. Ingram,” said Helen, “and I shall tell you a strange story about that picture to-night. I think you are worthy to hear it. Now might I ask you to wait ten minutes here for me? I saw a lady in the great drawing-room to whom I want to say something; and I do not think she will come this way.”

Mr. Ingram remained a few minutes before the picture after Helen had left him; then betook himself to one of the windows farthest from the recess where it stood; and sitting down there, fell into a train of meditation, as he reflected on the succession of proprietors who had come and passed away, in presence of those unchanging portraits,—such as might have been rendered in the words of the old monk of the Escorial—“It seems to me, when I reflect on these things, as if we men were the shadows, and the pictures the realities.”

His reverie was interrupted by the entrance of young Edward Sumner and his sister, who not perceiving any one in the room, went straight up to the Master's picture.

"Now, Beatrice, dear, here is the picture I told you I had seen, a few minutes ago; said the boy, pushing back the rich dark curls from his broad white forehead, as he gazed earnestly up to it. "Tell me if you ever saw any one like that picture, Beatrice? You did not, you say? Oh! but you have, dear. Think a minute. Look back a long—long time. You can't remember?—Well, I am surprised! Do you remember Mittiwald, Beatrice? Do you recollect what you were just talking about to Meta, this very morning, when I came to see if you were dressed?"

"Mr. Bertram, Edward? mamma's friend? Oh! how well I remember him! But this is not his picture, surely?" said the little girl, looking with a puzzled air at the antiquated dress. "This is not like the beautiful miniature of him that was sent to mamma, after we came to England, and which made her cry so bitterly; the one she sometimes shews us?"

"Yes, Beatrice, if you look more closely

“I think you will see that it is. Don’t you see the likeness?”

“I dare say I do,” slowly replied the child. “Yes, I see it in the eye. What beautiful eyes he had, Edward! How beautiful he looked, and how sad, that last time we ever saw him, when he was lying on the couch in the window!” How often I think of that day!”

“And I—often, often!” answered Edward an expression of solemn earnestness diffusing itself over his ingenuous young face. “I often think of what he said to me, Beatrice;—when he prayed God to bless me, and keep me from evil, and make me a comfort to my dear dear mother. These were the very words. I often repeat them in my prayers.”

At this moment the children were startled by a light touch upon the shoulder of each. They turned, and beheld their mother. Beatrice had entered unheard, and perceived only by Mr. Ingram. She had come to look once more—the first time for almost nineteen years,—the first time since she had quitted Kingsconnell at the close of that unforgotten visit there,—“the brightest, and the last,”—upon the picture

which had so strangely connected itself with her fate. And there before it stood her boy,—her own living image, in person and in mind, as she herself had stood, precisely at his age, on the day when she had first beheld it! The strangely-overpowering rush of recollections at the sight, for a moment rendered her incapable of speech.

“Mamma! dear mamma! This picture,—tell us about it?” exclaimed the eager little Beatrice, as soon as she found her mother was by. Edward laid his hand admonishingly on her arm. He had caught a glimpse of his mother’s tearful eye and quivering lip.

“Not just now, dear. Mamma will tell us another time,” said he.

“I will, my darlings, I promise you,” she replied. “Now run to Grandpapa and Aunt Grace. They are looking for you in the next room but one to this. They want you to see some curious old china that is laid out in the dining-room, to be sold. I shall join you by and bye.”

The children affectionately kissed their mother, and hurried off. Beatrice, left, as she supposed, alone in the room, placed herself on the deep fauteuil which still stood opposite the

picture,—William Bertram's favourite seat. She gazed round the spacious apartment. It seemed peopled with the phantoms of the lost. This room was more connected with her heart's history than any other at Kingsconnell; and in these few minutes she lived it all over again, from the first meeting to the last parting with Arthur there. She raised her eyes to the picture. She remembered the night of that brilliant ball; the form of her lover seemed to stand before her, arrayed in the warm hues of life and youth, as in all the brightness of his beauty, the buoyant grace of his early unbroken manhood, he had led her before it, on their way to his brother's room that night, had spoken of his own resemblance to it, and asked, half sadly, half sportively, whether the likeness would ever extend farther! And as the answer to that question likewise arose before her mind's eye, in the pale, cold, lifeless form on which she last had looked and wept at Mittiwald, the composure which she had hitherto maintained gave way, and she burst into a flood of tears.

For some minutes she wept unrestrainedly; and it was a relief to do so. Those tears seemed to drain off the dead cold weight which had been gathering at her heart since she had

entered the house. At last, fearful of interruption, she arose; and after one more long look around, one last gaze upon the picture, she slowly left the apartment by the side-door which communicated with the back staircase leading to the octagon room below; and which being at the opposite corner to the window where Mr. Ingram was seated, his presence remained unperceived by her. It need scarcely be added that her's, and all which accompanied it, had been far otherwise by him.

"Mrs. Sempill," he said, when that lady, after an absence protracted far beyond the time she had specified, had returned and explained the reason which had detained her, "I have at last arrived at the solution of the mystery respecting poor Bertram which so long perplexed me. My time, during your absence, has been well filled up."

"How do you mean, Mr. Ingram?" asked Helen. "What revelation has reached you in this quiet nook?"

"More than you suspect," was his answer. "I have discovered that your niece, Mrs. Sumner, was the object of his first attachment! I see by your countenance that I am right. Perhaps, some other time, you will tell me

more. But meanwhile, I can only say, I do not wonder now that his after-life was embittered by the thought of having forfeited affection such as her's."

The day at Kingsconnell came to an end at last. Beatrice had revisited, alone, every spot consecrated by memory; the old, deserted school-room, where so many hours of girlhood had been spent; the bed-room which had been her's and Helen's during their visit there,—the chamber which was pointed out as Arthur's, and which, like that of his unhappy prototype, had been unused since the period when, on the arrival of his mortal remains from the Continent, his coffin had been deposited there. Again, with a heart full to bursting, she had found herself alone in William's sitting-room; again, had seated herself where she sat during their last interview, on the low chair by his couch, which still remained in its old place, in the chilly, dismantled apartment, stripped as it was of all but the mere furniture, and the children's picture, another of those realities which had outlived the human shadows around it. From all these apartments Beatrice selected some article, to mark in the catalogue of sale as a purchase to be made for her,—a relic of days gone by. At last

she found herself in the dining-room, where she had appointed to meet her party, near the hour which they had settled as that of their departure; and sat down in a window to await them. The room was fuller of visitors than any of the others, all engaged in examining and commenting on the miscellaneous contents of the long range of dinner-tables, which were set up to the whole extent of the room, and covered with articles of china, crystal, and stone-ware, besides many of a nondescript nature, which had not been considered worth removing, and were therefore destined to be disposed of. Beatrice recognised many things amongst them; and as she caught snatches of the remarks made by the loungers who were looking at them, and discussing the prices at which they were likely to go, it seemed to her that the full desolation of the scene had never till that moment come home to her comprehension; that till then she had not been fully alive to the profanation of household sanctity, involved in such a pitiless laying open of its repositories. Her heart sickened as she listened to the coarse tone, the vulgar laugh, the small jest, which met her ears on all sides from people evidently uplifted in their own estimation by coming as intending

purchasers,—a position seeming to involve a temporary superiority,—into a dwelling where it was very plain they could scarcely have found admittance on any other terms. And if she turned from these to the more polished members of the motley assemblage, it was only to be pained in a different way, by some cold and indifferent mention of the Dead, some allusion to past events devoid alike of reverence and tenderness, or at best some commentary uttered in that tone of carelessness with which even good people are too apt to discuss calamities which do not affect themselves. She gazed around her, on the aspect of cold, cheerless, discomfort which pervades such a scene; and recalled the noble apartment as she had last beheld it, brilliantly lighted; that very table covered with a splendid repast; a party of joyous guests around it,—and none amongst them all more joyous than those who now lay low in the dust, and upon whose very graves it almost seemed as if the present intruders were treading. Then, raising her eyes, she beheld, directly opposite to her, the dark, unchanging portrait of *the Ancestor*. There he still hung; there, from the position whence he had viewed alike the daily household meeting, the sumptu-

ous banquet, and the funeral gathering ;—there he continued to hang, and to look sternly down upon this last, worst desecration of the Lares in the doomed dwelling, whence at length his latest descendant had been carried to the tomb. “Surely,” she thought, “unhappy spirit, thy wierd is accomplished now !”

It was evening. The Admiral and his grand-children had set off with Miss Grace in the carriage to escort her home to Gatesford ; and Beatrice, glad, as her aunt had surmised, to find herself alone after such a day, repaired to an apartment once familiar to our readers, and which, fitted up in a style of elegant simplicity, was now her own private sitting-room. And here, in a low chair in the window, open to the terrace as of old, she placed herself, looking out upon the garden, and down the espalier walk. It was all unaltered. Much had been done for the sweet old-fashioned garden, to improve it without changing its character ; it was adorned by a profusion and variety of flowers, and cultivated with a degree of care, very different from what had been the case in former times ; but nothing, nothing associated with the past, had sustained the

smallest alteration. It might have been but yesterday that the bright young face of Emily Bertram had last glanced in there from the terrace. It might have been that very day that the rapid springing step of Arthur had last ascended that familiar walk ; that his graceful form had darkened the window ; that he had entered, bringing light and gladness with him, seated himself opposite to where she was sitting ; gazed on her with those deep, dark, expressive eyes which seemed to scan her soul ; or read to her in that low musical voice whose unforgotten tones so often returned to her in her dreams. And yet how many years had passed since these things had ceased to be !

The evening was one of singular warmth and loveliness. Not a leaf was stirring in the garden or in the woods beneath ; the rich summer foliage hung motionless, relieved against the deepening blue of the transparent sky ; the flowers were sending up their richest incense from the garden beds ; the hush and stillness were unbroken, save by the occasional hum of a late-returning bee,—the deep drone of a large evening beetle, or the spirit-like flitting of a bat from tree to tree. It was the hour of memory ; the hour of all the twenty-

four, which spoke most forcibly to the imagination and the heart of Beatrice; as it must ever do to all who have loved and lost;—which brought most vividly before her the living presence of the departed. It was not always that she found herself able thus to welcome its approach in solitude. The duties of her daily life, towards her father, her children, the friends whose near neighbourhood she felt to be a blessing calling for so much gratitude,—and the poor who depended on her,—these claimed her first attention, and received it; and their claims frequently left her little time for solitary meditation. But if even her chastened spirit sometimes felt the small tasks of which ordinary existence is composed heavy and importunate, and was tempted to long for repose more profound, leisure for retrospection, and for self-communing, more entire than accorded with the position she had been called upon to occupy, those repinings were checked as soon as experienced, by a devout and thankful reference to the will of God. And day by day, and year by year, her faithful and single-hearted discharge of the part given her to fulfil, and preparedness for what might yet be assigned her ere her pilgrimage were ended,

resulted in a fuller spirit of conformity to that will, and in more and more of the internal peace arising from the consciousness of duty done. The spirit of those last counsels which she had received from William Bertram, was more and more becoming habitual to her mind, and influential over her actions; and in proportion as it became so, she was learning the blessedness of living for others, and not for herself.

But when, as in the present instance, Beatrice found herself enabled, without neglecting any duty, to indulge in an hour of solitude and recollection, the luxury, albeit a mournful one, was great in proportion to its rarity, and never had been more so than now. The events of the day had called up all the past before her; and the gushing tide of memory had been still farther swollen by the circumstance of her having found a letter from Mr. Carmichael awaiting her on her return home. They were occasional, though not very frequent, correspondents; but his letters, when he did write, were long, and more unreserved than his speech would probably have been. The present, like all the rest, entered largely upon the topic of his labours in the distant up-country station

which was his appointed sphere,—spoke of his hopes, his successes, and his discouragements, but breathed throughout, the spirit of devotedness to his Master's service, which actuated all he did. Something too it said of presentiments, of internal convictions that his term of allotted labour was not to be a protracted one; and more of the tender, the indelible recollections, which in his remote exile never ceased to haunt him, of the scenes and the friends associated with his earlier days. He spoke of Kingsconnell, of Sempilltower, of the Grange; he told how in his dreams by night, in his waking visions through the long hot hours of the day, the deep green shade of their woods, the music of their rippling streams, were present with him once again; how far more frequently still, the living presence of those who were once the denizens of these scenes seemed to visit him in his loneliness; till time and space ceased to exist for him; and they, the associates of bye-gone hours,—the absent, the changed, the dead, who could meet no more until they met in the world of spirits, were in fancy, for a brief period, re-united as of old. "But then," he said, "comes the re-action, the sense of loneliness, more than ever overpowering

from the contrast; and beneath which there are times when my weak faith seems ready to give way, and my heart to die within me. Yet, thanks be to God! these times are few in number, and of less and less frequent recurrence. Thanks be to God! I am enabled to find refuge from them, in the prayers and the solemn services of our holy Ritual, binding together as they do, in one golden chain, the members of the Church Militant on this side the grave, however far remote, however desolate in human estimation,—with those who have ceased from their labours, the Church at rest beneath the Altar,—and with the angels and ministering spirits who are still aiding us, as they have aided them,—the glorified Church and its Eternal Head in Heaven!”

“Thanks be to God!” mentally echoed Beatrice, as laying down this letter, after a second perusal of it where she sat alone, she raised her eyes, filled with tears, to the holy, peaceful sky. “Thanks be to God indeed! that another, and one of the most valued, of my early friends, has his trust thus anchored firmly on the rock of ages! And if these forewarnings, of which he speaks be realised, and he too be destined to depart long before me,—what can

I say? What can I dare to say of a change for him so unutterably glorious, except in the words of one not unacquainted with bereavements — ‘Blessed as it is to have friends on earth, it is still more blessed to have friends in heaven?’ And I have so many there! whilst

‘I am here,
Living again o’er all my life’s farewells.’ ”

Her memory called them all in review. Her gentle mother, with that sweet infant spirit by her side;—William Bertram, her beloved friend;—Violet, whom she loved unknown;—Edward,—her husband, the father of her children, the kind protector, the tender counsellor, who had been taken from her just as the bond of their mutual affection had become most intimate, their union of spirit most entire; and for whose loss she felt, however resigned to the will of God, that she must go mourning all her remaining days. And last of all, Arthur, the dearly loved,—the deeply erring, the penitent, the pardoned;—Arthur, the companion of her girlhood, the lover of her youth;—the beautiful, the gifted, the all but lost; whose wasted existence and its mournful close, would have connected his

memory with associations too agonizing to be borne, but for the blessed consolation of reflecting upon the hope his end had afforded. Better, far better, in such a case, was his premature and tragic death than his brilliant life. Him too, she felt that she could number amongst her friends in Paradise. They were all with her in this solemn hour. It seemed as if their spirits were near, to console and strengthen her for the lengthened period of probation, of exertion, and of discipline, which might still be extended between her and rest. And as, with a grateful heart, she acknowledged the manifold blessings which encompassed her path,—the blessings of peace, of competence, of permission to return to the home endeared by so many memories of the dead, and situated near to so many best loved amongst the living, of being enabled to minister to the happiness of her father's age,—above all, of the hope and promise afforded in her children,—she felt in her inmost soul how calmly, how patiently, how cheerfully it behoved her to take up the daily Cross, whatever it might be, which is appointed for every wayfarer on earth below; how meekly it was her duty to watch and labour here, looking for the recompense hereafter. The

words of a poet, very dear and very familiar to her, were in her heart, as she still sat gazing up from the slumbering earth to the sleepless sky.

“ From darkness here and dreariness,
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand to bless
Our trial-hour of woes!
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not up earth's dark glade,
The gate of Heaven unclose.”

THE END.

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